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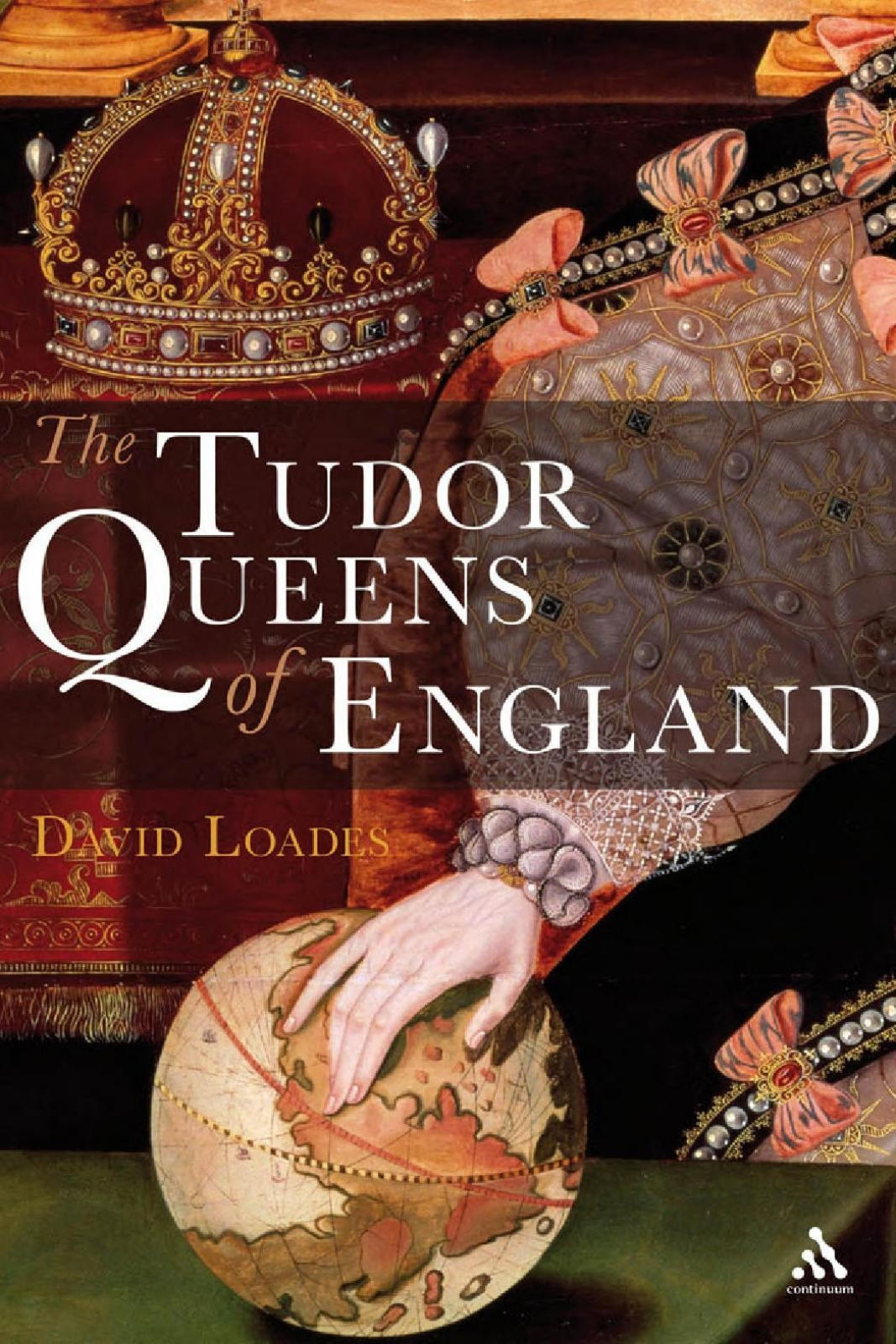

The Tudor Queens of England

David Loades

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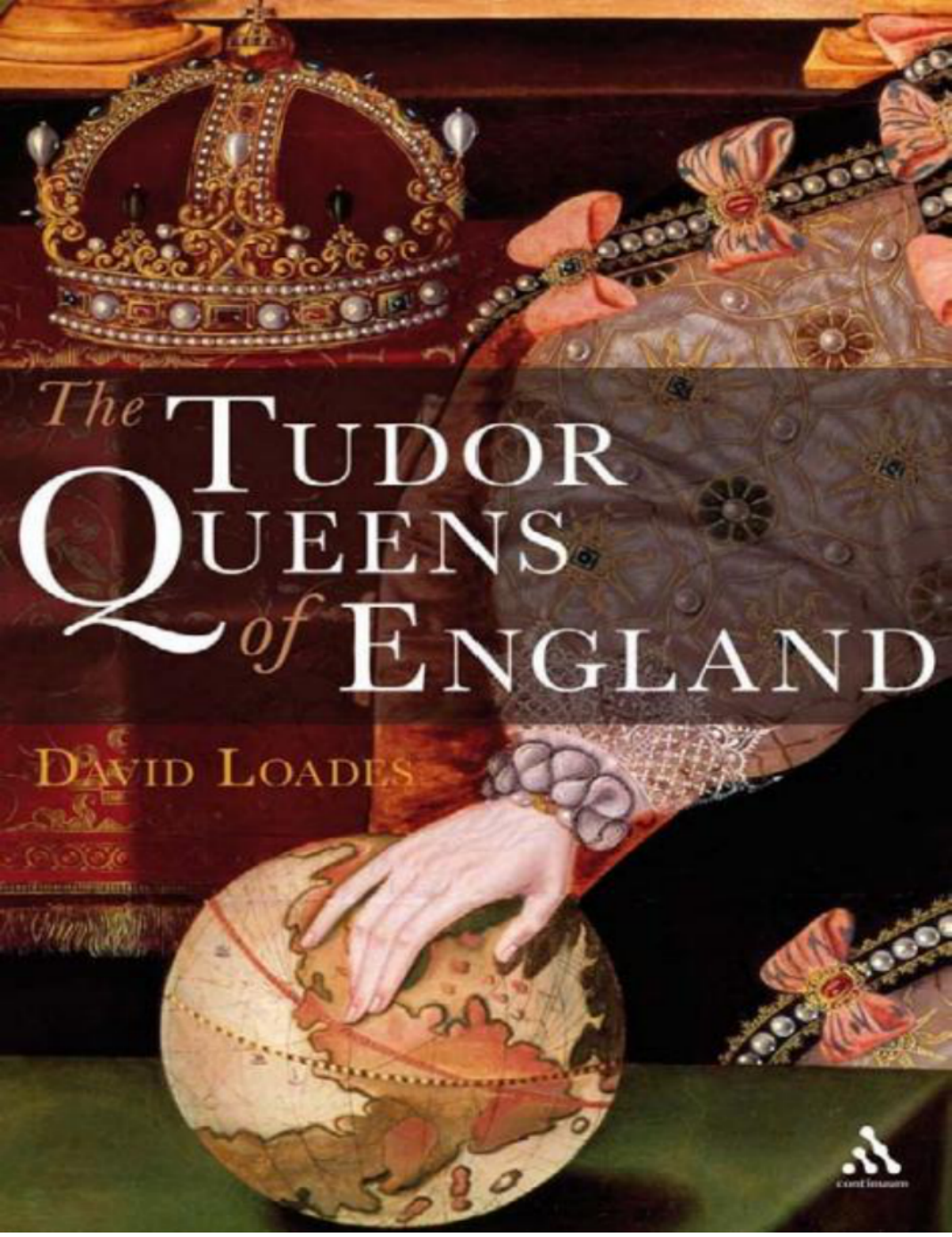
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David Loades

TUDOR QUEENS OF ENGLAND

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Tudor Queens of England

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For Judith,

wife, sovereign and friend

Introduction: Image and Reality

A medieval queen was not a ruler. The imagery of power was exclusively masculine and very largely military. A king led his soldiers into battle, executed the brutal sentences of justice upon criminals and played war games with his nobles and companions. The ideal Christian prince was a crusader, the father of strong sons, tough and wise. It was his fi rst duty to protect his realm in arms and to be leader and patron of those who fought. He was also the protector of the Church – that is of those who prayed – and of those who laboured, traded or otherwise lived under the shelter of his shield. His councillors and clerks were either nobles, who shared his value systems, or celibate clergy. God had been incarnate in the form of a man, and the whole bible, particularly the Old Testament, was heavily androcentr

ic.1

Women were seen mainly in relation to men – the symbolism of Adam's rib being frequently invoked. A woman complemented her husband, bearing his children, tempering his severity, sustaining his virtue – and of course fl attering his ego. Women were believed to be intellectually inferior to men, physically weaker and morally more fragile. The ideal woman was chaste, obedient and patient. A woman held no offi ce in the public domain, and her virtue was judged against her own kind, not in relation to men. Her role model was the Virgin Mary, the mother of God and the only woman to have accomplished the miraculous feat of being a mother and a virgin simultaneously. At the same time every woman was also Eve, a source of temptation and potentially of the betrayal of God. This seems to have been primarily a clerical perception, and arose from the extremely negative attitude of the medieval Church towards sexuality. Female sexuality was mysterious and fascinating but also evil if not strictly controlled. Without the discipline that man imposed upon her, any woman might be a whore or a witch

– or both. In the middle of the sixteenth century John Knox (not, admittedly, a sympathetic witness) could write:

Of which words it is plain that the Apostle meaneth (in 1 Corinthians 11) that woman in her greatest perfection should have knowen that man was Lord above her … in her greatest perfection woman was created to be subject to man. But after her fall and rebel lion committed against God, there was put upon her a new necessity, and she was made subject to man by the irrevocable sentence of God, pronounced in these words: 2

I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception, with sorrow shalt thou bear thy children, and thy will shall be subject to thy man; and he shall bear dominion over

thee …2

And he went on to quote Tertullian: 'Thou are the porte and gate of the Devil. Thou art the fi rst transgressor of God's law …' In spite of Tertullian, this was sharper and more hostile than the prevailing medieval view and Christine de Pisan was not alone in presenting her contemporaries in a positive light. In the right circumstances (within marriage), motherhood was a noble calling, but it was strictly under male control and one of the prime reasons for the extreme hostility to extra-marital sex was that it exemplifi ed female nature operating outside that control. The single mother was like the masterless man, operating beyond the conventional discipline of society.

Both the canon and the common law refl ected these perceptions. The woman who had extra-marital sex, whether or not she had borne a child, was a suitable subject for penance and was liable to the ostracized – especially by other women. She was also liable to be without support because men were notoriously reluctant to admit their responsibility for such matters; she was thus a burden on the Church's charitable resources. Fornication was by far the commonest reason why women were cited before the ecclesiastical courts. Where the man could be identifi ed he would be cited as well but often he seems to have avoided detection. In theory the distinction between rape and fornication was very clear. The former was a crime under the common law for which the death penalty could be imposed; the latter was a sin by both parties for which the woman usually carried the responsibility. The trouble was that then (as now) the practical distinction lay not in the commission of the act but in the attitude of the woman – which was no less problematic to establish than it is today. Women were certainly protected against predatory males as far as the law was concerned but the uncertainties of prosecution remained formidable, especially if the guilty party was well protected by patronage. In terms of property, the law made a clear distinction between married and unmarried women. The latter, whether virgins or widows, had full control over whatever they might possess,

whether it were lands or moveable goods, and were protected against depredations in the same way that men were. In other words the

femme seul was a proper person in the eyes of the law. 3 Not so the married woman, or *femme couvert*. She had no existence apart from her husband and any property that she took into the marriage remained vested in him for the duration of his life, unless it were protected by some special trust or other covenant. Her only safeguard was that her husband could not dispose of any such property without her consent, but it could not descend to her own heirs

until after his death. She could not testify against him in court and her position was in every sense dependent.

If an aristocrat died without male heirs then his property could descend to his daughter or be equally divided if there was more than one. His title, however, if he had one, became extinct. This was a refl ection of the military origins of such dignities and of the consideration that no woman could perform military service in person. A woman could transmit a claim but it was entirely at the discretion of the monarch whether such a claim was recognized – and usually it was not. Of course if the same aristocrat died without heirs of any kind then his property also returned to the Crown by a process known as

escheat. In the sixteenth century it was possible for a woman to hold a title of nobility in her own right by special creation but in the two cases where this happened – the Earldom of Salisbury (Margaret Pole) and the Marquisate of Pembroke (Anne Boleyn) – the heritability of the title was not tested as both were extinguished by attainder. No woman held such a title during the fi fteenth century. From these limitations the royal dignity itself stood apart. In France the so-called Salic Law not only prohibited a woman from holding the Crown, but also barred all claims transmitted through the female line. That was not the case in England and both the Yorkists and the Tudors based their claims primarily on the female line of descent. The possession of the Crown itself, however, had never been tested. In the twelfth century the Empress Matilda had made such a claim and had been recognized by some but had never secured effective possession and had never been crowned. This issue came to the fore during the reign of Henry VIII and was actually put to the test on the death of Edward VI in 1553, when both the potential claimants were women. As we shall see, the consequences were to preoccupy lawyers and councillors alike when Mary, the successful claimant, announced her intention to marry. The problem was that a ruling queen was forced by her position into being a surrogate male but was simultaneously a woman and perceived as being subject to all the traditional limitations of her sex. This created challenges both to her ingenuity and to her sense of identity and made her a completely different creature from a Queen Consort, who was primarily a wife. The latter did not exercise *dominium*, but was both ideologically and politically integral to the

proper deployment of her husband's authority. 4 What she held was a status rather than an offi ce but, if she acted discreetly and respected the perceptions of those about her, she could supply vital elements in her husband's kingship that might otherwise be lacking. As Jacobus de Casalis wrote in *The Game and Play of Chess*: A Quene ought to be chaste, wyse, of honest peple/well mannered and not curious in nourishynge of her children/her wysedom ought not only tappere in fact and workes, but 4

also in speakynge that is to wete that she be secrete and telle not suche thynges as ought to be holden secrete … A Quene ought to be well mannered amonge all she ought to be tymerous and shamefast …

5

In other words she should show all those qualities that were held to be virtues in contemporary women, but to an enhanced degree because of her unique position. Most important, perhaps, was her role as mediator and intercessor. Here the image of the Virgin was particularly signifi cant because of the Church's emphasis upon the supernatural intercession that she was perceived to offer. Stories of Mary interceding for otherwise hopeless sinners were legion and the sight of a human queen, on her knees and with her hair unbound before her stern and unbending lord had an irresistible appeal. When Catherine interceded for the perpetrators of the Evil May Day in 1517 she was acting out a trope, as indeed Henry was in responding. There was also more than a suggestion that – just as the Queen was acting out a human role in this drama – so the King was acting out a Divine mercy. A foreign queen had a double responsibility in this respect. Not only could she intercede in this conventional sense but she was also the natural mediator between her husband and her own kindred. Both Catherine de Valois and Margaret of Anjou were supposed to be not only mediators but, in their marriages, symbols of peace and reconciliation. It was the wedding, after all, which made a queen, just as it was the coronation that made a king. When a queen was crowned, it was not only a recognition of her position but also an enhancement of her husband's power and a way of emphasizing that she was no longer an ordinary noblewoman. It was because their wedding had been quiet to the point of being secret that, on 30 September 1464, Elizabeth Woodville was led into the chapel of Reading Abbey by the Duke of Clarence and the Earl of Warwick 'and openly honoured as Queen by the Lords and all the people'.

6

Because Elizabeth of York had her own claim to the kingdom, a claim that had to be subsumed in that of her husband, her marriage to Henry VII in 1486

was choreographed with especial care and medallions were struck. It was a rite of passage for the kingdom, as well as for Elizabeth. She was crowned on St Katherine's day and William Capgrave's life of St Katherine was not slow to make the same point, that 'government by a woman is unfeasible' and that consequently it was the King's position that mattered.

7

Of course a foreign queen could also serve a quite different purpose if circumstances demanded it. She could be a lightening conductor for hostility and frustration. When the expected peace with France failed to follow the marriage of Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou in 1445, the unfortunate young woman found

herself blamed. Margaret was to be particularly vulnerable in this respect because circumstances forced her into a role of political leadership that was supposed to be alien to her nature. In 1462, when she found herself struggling to maintain the cause of her increasingly defi cient husband, she was fi ercely denounced by Yorkist propagandists for bringing in Frenchmen and Scots 'to destroy utterly the name, the tongue and all the bloude Englyshe of this oure saide R

ealme …'8

Margaret was caught in a trap, because she was forced to appear as Henry's agent at a time when he was virtually incapable of helping himself – and there was no way in which her image could conform to the political reality. A queen was supposed to be chaste because only by such means could the integrity of the royal line be protected, but the most important of all her functions was to bear her husband children. If she was defi cient in other ways, skilful image brokers could conceal the fact, but no amount of spin could disguise her failure to produce an heir. Hence the ceremony that attended a royal lying in. This was the classic opportunity to display successful queenship, and churchings and Christenings were public and splendid events. Childbirth was the ultimate female mystery and even comparatively humble gentlewomen would retire from view, accompanied by a midwife and one or two female servants. Queens did the same on a grander scale. However in their cases the stakes were much higher and the possibilities of fraud or substitution proportionately greater. Consequently, although no man (unless he were a physician) could be present at the birth itself, visits from royal offi cials during the period of confi nement were common. In 1555

Mary's phantom pregnancy gave rise to all sorts of scandalous rumours and her condition was clearly as much of a mystery to contemporaries as it has remained ever since – but no one had the temerity to accuse their sovereign of adultery. When Anne Boleyn had a miscarriage in February 1536, her enemies were quick to attribute it to sexual misconduct but it would have been high treason to have levelled similar accusations against Mary – and not even John Foxe attempted to do so. The unfortunate Margaret of Anjou was so accused, although not at the time of Prince Edward's birth. As

evidence of Henry's mental incapacity began to mount after 1453 it began to be doubted whether he could ever have fathered a son and as young Edward's place in the scheme of Lancastrian monarchy became more evident and immediate their Yorkist rivals had every incentive to impugn his legitimacy. That was unusual; the careful observance of all the correct rituals of motherhood was normally suffi cient to protect the Queen from such slanders and to guarantee the subsequent enhancement of her status.

The queen who was also the mother of a male heir was doubly fortunate. Not only had she fulfi lled her highest duty – she had enhanced her husband's authority to an immeasurable extent and demonstrated that God looked favourably upon 6

his government. The political role of the Queen Consort thus depended to some extent upon her womanhood but it also varied with circumstances and with her own personality. A queen who was the mother of a royal prince could not expect the same control over his upbringing that an ordinary gentlewoman had. Despite the Holy Family imagery she did not breastfeed him – that being the responsibility of a specially appointed wet nurse. Very often a separate household was established for him almost from the time of his birth. The queen was consulted but all appointments were made by the King, even when the child was

'among the women' in accordance with the custom of the time. Anne Boleyn does not even seem to have been consulted when her daughter Elizabeth was weaned and contact between them seems to have been confi ned to regular visits. When Margaret's son, Prince Edward, was created Prince of Wales in March 1454 he was less than a year old and, although his Council was a political and administrative institution rather than a domestic one, Queen Margaret was infl uential in its creation. Edward IV's son, also Edward, was promoted at about the same age in 1471 and his mother was, very unusually, formally admitted as a councillor and is alleged to have dominated that body, which was one of the reasons why the Duke of Gloucester viewed her with suspicion in 1483. Arthur was slightly older when he was promoted in 1489, and the then Queen, Elizabeth of York, is not known to have played any part. By the time that Henry became Prince, in 1504, she was dead and there were no more princes of Wales within the period, the next being the eldest son of James I in 1610. The only Queen Consort to bear a son during the sixteenth century was Jane Seymour and she did not live to play any part in his upbringing. Elizabeth of York was protective of her elder daughter, Margaret, and is alleged to have persuaded her husband not to marry her for diplomatic reasons before the canonical age of co-habitation, which was 12. Margaret was actually 13 when she married James IV of Scotland in a purely political match and Elizabeth seems to have supported that – or at least she did not oppose it. A queen also continued, to some extent, to be defi ned by her own family. Catherine de Valois made little of her royal blood after her marriage and took as her second husband a mere household servant, while Margaret of Anjou was alternately bedevilled and rescued by hers. No one was

allowed to forget that she was of the Ducal House of Anjou. Catherine of Aragon actually served as her father's accredited ambassador in England between her marriages to Arthur and Henry and was the symbol of an alliance by which the King set great store in the early years of his reign. When he was trying to get rid of her in 1527, it was her family, in the person of the Emperor, Charles V, who stood in his way and forced him into one of the defi ning actions of his reign. However, paradoxically the two most important consort families were not

foreign but domestic. The Greys and the Woodvilles owed their spectacular rise entirely to the marriage of Elizabeth to Edward IV. The familiar picture of the antagonism between the Queen's kindred and Richard of Gloucester in 1483 is almost entirely the creation of Tudor propaganda but the elevation of Elizabeth's father as Earl Rivers in 1466 and of her son Thomas Grey as Earl of Huntingdon in 1471 and Marquis of Dorset in 1475 were suffi ciently factual and refl ect a deliberate attempt on Edward's part to build up his wife's family into a signifi cant political force. Her successor, Elizabeth of York, had no need of such patronage. Had it not been for her gender, she would have had a better claim to the Crown than her husband; on the other hand, if she had been born male she might have gone the same way as her brothers. Her marriage to Henry VII was celebrated for years as the reconciliation of the great rivalry of Lancaster and York and she continued to use the white rose as her badge for the rest of her life. In her son and daughters ran the blood of both royal families, and through her elder daughter, Margaret, it was conveyed to the Scottish royal house of Stuart.

Edward IV's patronage of the Woodvilles was refl ected in a paler way in the manner with which Henry VIII dealt with the kindred of his second, third, fi fth and sixth wives. Sir Thomas Boleyn became Earl of Wiltshire in 1529, Edward Seymour Earl of Hertford in 1537 and William Parr Earl of Essex in 1543 as a result of his marriages to Anne, Jane and Catherine. The Duke of Norfolk, who was Catherine Howard's uncle, did not gain any further promotion when she shared the royal bed, but for about two years his ascendancy at court and in the council was unchallenged. Unfortunately what went up could also come down. The Boleyns were ruined by Anne's alleged infi delities and the Howards by Catherine's real ones. William Parr was never a fi gure of much signifi cance but Edward Seymour, as the uncle of Prince Edward, the cherished heir to the throne, was an important national fi gure in the last years of Henry's life and more particularly during the minority of his son. Henry VIII's marital adventures confused the image of queenship. No one could claim that Anne Boleyn was either meek or patient. Unlike Margaret of Anjou, she was not forced into a political role by the incapacity of her husband. She chose it, and created a formidable clientage over which the King had only imperfect control – which was one of the main reasons for her downfall. Nor

could anyone plausibly describe Catherine Howard as chaste and not even the most fl attering courtier could apply the image of the Virgin Mary to her without arousing unseemly mirth. Catherine Parr was a queen in a more traditional mould. Although neither virgin nor mother, she recreated the King's shattered family and by her wisdom and discretion helped to temper the unpredictability of his increasingly uncertain temper. She was as 8

chaste, wise and well mannered as even Jacobus de Cassalis could have wished and she was the last of her kind for over half a century.

A ruling queen was a completely different creature and with the accession of Mary in 1553 we enter a new world. The situation was not unprecedented in Europe. Isabella of Castile offered a recent and obvious example but that was in a different legal system and few Englishmen would have known much about her. A woman had never governed England and there were uncertainties both of image and of expectation. In the case of a Queen Consort, who exercised temporary power, her husband defi ned the position. When Edward IV went to France in 1475, he left Elizabeth as governor in his place and when Henry VIII did the same in 1513 he left the government in the hands of Queen Catherine. The same applied in 1544, with a different Catherine but the same process. However that was at the King's discretion and if he was incapacitated, or died leaving his heir a minor, the same conditions did not apply. When Henry VI collapsed in 1453, the Duke of York became Protector and when Edward died in 1483, leaving his sons under age, he named his brother the Duke of Gloucester as Protector. After Henry VIII's death in 1547 the council named the Duke of Somerset as Protector and no one suggested that the position should have gone to the Queen Dowager. John Knox was not alone in believing that the rule of women over men was unnatural and contrary to the Law of God, but that was not the prevailing view.

9 It is impossible to say what might have happened in 1553 if Mary had been challenged by a man with a plausible claim but, in the event, her only rival was another woman whose claim was by general consent inferior. Unfortunately there was no consensus about the nature of Mary's claim. The Queen herself believed that her right lay in the fact that she was Henry's only legitimate child and that was a view shared by her Habsburg kindred and by most of Catholic Europe. Her subjects, however, believed for the most part that her entitlement lay in the dispositions that Henry had made by statute in 1543 and in his last will and testament. This hardly mattered for the purpose of seeing off Jane Grey in July 1553 but it was important thereafter, as we shall see. Mary was crowned as though she had been a king, convened parliament, established her Council and acted in every respect as her father or grandfather would have done. For the time

being she even acted as Supreme Head of the Church, although it soon became apparent that the title offended her conscience. As a *femme seul*, she was in command of her own private lordship and her lawyers, at least, were comfortable with that thought. The imagery that was developed on her behalf, most of it admittedly in Europe rather than in England, made the best of her unexpected emergence from affl iction to power. She was the helpless virgin triumphing over the strong man armed – the woman clothed with the sun, and so on. 10 This successfully blended

femininity with success, but was hardly imagery for the exercise of power. That no one ventured to produce, and Mary herself clearly had no idea what form it should take. Unlike Edward, she could not even attempt to strike her father's pose. She then compounded her problems by deciding to marry. There were good reasons for this, the most compelling being her need for an heir, but she also sought to use marriage to provide for the security of her realm, and to reinforce the religious policy upon which she was determined. She set about this in the same way that a King would have done – she took advice where she pleased (in this case mainly from Simon Renard, the Imperial ambassador) made up her own mind, and then announced her decision. This took her councillors aback, but only because they were expecting her to be 'shamfast' and to take her lead from them. In choosing her mate, Mary had acted like a man, but there the similarities came to an end. By converting herself from a

femme seul into a *femme couvert* she was muddying the waters horribly.

If the realm was a

dominium, or lordship, as most believed, would it pass to her husband in full ownership for the duration of his life, as would be the case with a private lordship? She had made it clear almost from the beginning that her intended husband was Prince Philip of Spain, the only son of her cousin the Emperor Charles V. This was not well received in England and the problems that would have arisen in any case in respect of a King Consort were redoubled by the unpopularity of her choice. If there were no children, and she predeceased him, did he remain king for the remainder of his natural life? If there were children, and Mary died while they were underage, did he automatically become regent?

During their marriage, what control would he exercise over her person and the resources of the kingdom? A conventional marriage suggested pessimistic answers to all these questions. The trouble was that the roles of a wife and of a sovereign were not really compatible. A queen could hardly be a petitioner and intercessor in her own country, let alone a humble and dutiful helpmate. She could be chaste and discreet, but hardly silent – and what if her duty compelled her to fall out with her royal spouse? Some of these problems were resolved by

the treaty that accompanied the marriage agreement, which was negotiated by Charles rather than Philip, and gave him very little independent authority in Eng

land.11 If there was an heir, he would be regent in the event of the Queen's death but only until the normal age of majority and if she died childless his interest in the realm would cease. Philip was not pleased and many Englishmen believed that such conditions would be unenforceable, but in theory the treaty completed an acceptable relationship. The more limited legal problem was resolved by a statute in Mary's second parliament that 'ungendered' the Crown and declared that a queen's authority was identical with that of a king.12

Despite all these precautions, Mary never really came to terms with her predicament, as we shall see. Nor could she ever fi nd an image with which she was comfortable. If she had ever become a mother she might have used the Virgin as a role model but that was not to be. Neither a virgin nor a mother, she was also a wife who, for most of her married life, was left to cope on her own. Philip was at her side for only about 15 months of their four-year marriage. While he was present they appeared together in studied equilibrium, but while he was absent she was rather at a loss to express her status. Praise for her religious policies, particularly from the clergy, was strong but unfocused. Her portraits show her magnifi cently dressed but otherwise nondescript – neither regal nor iconic. The only image that survives of her after her marriage is the one she would least have wanted and in many ways the unfairest – that of Bloody Mary, the arch persecutor and religious bigot. Mary was a woman of puritanical conscience and no imagination or sense of humour. She had also spent so much of the formative part of her life acting out the role of a suffering servant that she was unable to adjust to power when she found herself possessing it. Her failure to bear a child was probably critical in this as in other ways and left her after 1555 with a role that she could live (as she had to) but could not express.

Her half-sister and successor Elizabeth was a total contrast in every respect save one – she was also a woman thrust into a role normally played by men. The sad example of Mary's failed marriage – and even more the problems that it had created – may have deterred her from following the same route or it may not, we do not know. What we do know is that her whole attitude, both to the exercise of power and to its imagery, was quite different. Mary had been hesitant, traditional in her conception of a woman's place in the scheme of things, and uncertain of her image, but Elizabeth relished the challenge and took politics by the scruff of the neck. She was probably both more intelligent and better educated than her sister and was well aware that intellectually she had the edge of almost everyone around her. That was why she was able to fi ll her court and administration with men of such extraordinary ability. While recognizing that she was operating in a man's world, she had no time at all for the traditional notion that some matters were beyond a woman's competence. Whereas Mary had regarded her sex as a liability, and potentially a

crippling one, Elizabeth used hers as weapon. Quite aware that she was strikingly good looking, she set out to fascinate and tease the men with whom she had to deal in a way that her sister would have regarded with incredulous horror. Women were supposed to be unstable and procrastinating – very well, she would delay and change her mind until they were all dancing with frustrated rage – knowing perfectly well that only she could make the necessary decisions. Let them wait! Whether her famous courtships

were genuine or simply political ploys we do not know and it is quite likely that she was not sure herself. Only in her dealings with Robert Dudley did the fundamental confl ict between the woman and the Queen become apparent, and then the Queen won, at considerable c

ost.13 Like Mary, her religious conscience was highly developed, but whereas God told Mary that she must restore the old faith and eliminate heresy, He told Elizabeth that He had entrusted a realm and a church to her and that she would be answerable to Him for both. Let no one presume to usurp her authority.

If Elizabeth had ever married – as every man at her court (and most women) expected her to – she might well have become mired in the same conceptual and political bog but by not sharing her bed she avoided sharing her power. By not being a wife she was free to act as a king – and even donned armour at the time of the Armada to address her troops assembled at Tilbury. No man could have governed in her inimitable style – certainly not her successor James I – because even in her old age (when it had become somewhat grotesque) she never ceased to play the game of courtly love. Politics eventually came to wear the masque of charade but woe betide anyone who presumed upon the old lady's indulgence, as the Earl of Essex found to his cost. In some respects Elizabeth's imagery was frozen in time, because it was always depicting the idea rather than the real woman. Her portraits, and there are hundreds of them, are iconic, stylized. Whether they bear any relation to the real woman is almost irrelevant. She was Deborah, Astrea, Belphoebe and many other biblical or mythical fi gures. Above all, she was a fi gure of mystery and power – mysterious as only a woman could be in a world of men. As the prospects of marriage receded, even in the eyes of the most optimistic, virginity became her trade mark. She never exploited the Blessed Mary to provide a role model – that would not have suited her Protestant conscience; rather, she became an iconic virgin herself – a woman whose physical integrity became a symbol for the inviolability of her country. By remaining a

femme seul, Elizabeth was able to develop a female style of monarchy that was quite distinct from the traditional male style to which all Queen Consorts were subjected, but just as effective.

It would be easy in this post-feminist world to contrast the triumphant reign of Elizabeth with the downtrodden consorts of Edward IV or Henry VIII and to conclude that the latter were poor specimens of womanhood. That would be a serious mistake because their circumstances were quite different and the tasks that they performed quite distinct. Consorts were always seen as aspects of their husbands and contributors to his

maiestas, never as people in their own right. They might, as was the way with women of all social classes, have great infl uence over their husbands, but any action that resulted was always his responsibility,

not hers An intelligent woman with ideas of her own thus faced a dilemma, as was the case with both Margaret of Anjou and Anne Boleyn. Margaret paid with her reputation and Anne with her life. It was in motherhood and in intercession that a Queen Consort found her fulfi lment, and both were distinctively female accomplishments. No king could bear his own child and a consort who failed in this respect, like Catherine of Aragon, was liable to pay a high price. The idea of marriage as a free and equal partnership was alien to the medieval mind. It was a state that men entered into with their own interests in mind and within which the woman had a defi ned and subordinate role. She was judged by the skill with which she discharged that role. In principle a ruling queen was a man, discharging a male function, which was why combining rule with marriage was so schizophrenic and why Elizabeth's balancing act was so uniquely successful. No female ruler actually became a mother until the time of Queen Anne, over a century after Elizabeth's death – and by then the world had changed so much that her consort did not have to be recognized as king. Anne's frequent and futile pregnancies were an affl iction but did not affect the way in which she was regarded, which was more as a fi gurehead than as an effective head of state. Elizabeth would have been horrifi ed by the transformation. Victoria was also born into a culture of marital subordination and although her infl uence upon her ministers was considerable she was more an imperial symbol and icon than an effective governor. Her constitutional position was by then so clearly defi ned that her husband, in a neat role reversal, was consigned to the supportive role previously occupied by female consorts. Outside the bedroom, the customs of marriage did not apply to the Crown. Victoria's daughters helped to defi ne the royal houses of Europe and her long widowhood left a symbolic trail that long outlived her. The present Queen and her consort have been totally defi ned by constitutional propriety and since Victoria's death the British monarchy has been constrained to reinvent itself not once but several times. The gulf that separates Elizabeth II from Elizabeth I is as great as that which separated the fi rst Elizabeth from Catherine de Valois.

1

The Queen as Trophy: Catherine de Valois

Catherine was the youngest daughter of Charles VI of France and his consort, Isabella of Bavaria. She was born in Paris on 27 October 1401 at the Hotel de St Pol, which was used almost as a retreat when her father's mental illness was particularly severe. Her upbringing was eccentric, being marked by periods of neglect and even privation as her father was not in touch with reality and her mother was pursuing her ow

n agenda.1 At one point she was even abducted by her uncle, Louis of Bavaria, but on that occasion the King recovered his reason at the critical time. Isabella was imprisoned at Tours and Catherine was placed temporarily in other hands but she never seems to have borne her mother any ill will for her erratic behaviour. She had been called into political service long before she was old enough to be aware of what was happening and before her second birthday was betrothed to Charles, the grandson and heir of Louis, Duke of Bourbon. However, Charles died in 1409 and even before that Henry IV of England had been proposing a peace settlement to be sealed by a marriage between Catherine and his own heir, Henry of Monmouth. However, there were a number of stumbling blocks in the way of such a settlement, not least Henry's claim to the Crown of France and the scale of the bride's dowry, which the English king is alleged to have set at two million crowns. Charles VI offered 450,000, and the negotiation came to nothing.

When Henry IV died on 20 March 1413, the issue was still unsettled but his successor, who was still unmarried and 25 years old, was keen to continue the quest and in January 1414 vowed that he would wed no other. France, however, was in a state of almost constant crisis, with the Burgundians and the Armagnacs at each other's throats. The king was again mentally ill and only occasionally fi t to conduct business. It seems that Henry may well have had it in mind to secure his bride by capture rather than negotiation because he was obviously anxious to take advantage of France's problems. He entered into an alliance with John the Fearless of Burgundy for that purpose in 1414. On 13 August 1415 he attacked on the fl imsiest of pretexts and laid siege to Harfl eur. Shortly after he won his great victory at Agincourt, and began the systematic conquest of Normandy. Negotiations for peace and marriage alike disappeared from view.

With the King incapacitated and the Queen discredited, the government of France was temporarily in the hands of the Constable, Bernard of Armagnac. The royal family was in almost total eclipse. Two successive dauphins had died and the third, Charles, was as yet too young to assume any responsibility. John the Fearless had held aloof from the Normandy campaign but as the English increasingly gained the upper hand so his relations with Henry became closer. In May 1418, operating in the name of the Queen, he seized Paris, and with it the formal government of what was left of France. The Dauphin, Charles, however, had escaped from Paris and, showing no signs of his father's debility, in spite of his youth, set himself up as regent at Bourges. From there he controlled (more or less) a large area in the centre of the country. In order to resolve this deadlock, an agreement with the offi cial government in Paris now became increasingly desirable from Henry's point of view and on 7 May 1419 envoys were appointed to negotiate such a settlement. Catherine, now 18, seems to have been present at these discussions, together with her mother who is alleged to have exercised great infl uence over her. Once again the size of the dowry was a sticking point. Meanwhile John of Burgundy was also negotiating with the Dauphin because, clearly, an agreement that included him would be preferable to one that did not. He was strong enough to make a considerable nuisance of himself if he were excluded. However, on 10 September 1419, the two had a blazing row on the bridge at Montereau, as a result of which the Duke was set upon and murdered by the Dauphin's followers. Charles was not actually present when this happened but was generally (and reasonably) held responsible. This put paid to any chance of a tripartite settlement and since the rest of the royal family, including Catherine, was under the control of Philip of Burgundy, John's son and heir, the way to a more limited agreement was now open. At the same time Philip's animosity to the Dauphin could be taken for granted.

The resulting Treaty of Troyes, signed in May 1420, has been represented as the nadir of French fortunes. Although in one guise the Duke of Burgundy was a great nobleman of France and could not unreasonably negotiate on the King's behalf, at the same time he was also an independent ruler in alliance with the King's enemy. The ambiguities of the French political system were as much to blame for

the humiliation at Troyes as Charles VI's weakness. Henry V agreed to give up the title 'King of France' in return for recognition of his sovereignty over those territories which he already controlled. Henry and Charles would both continue for the time being to rule their respective realms but if Charles should die first the King of England would succeed him, and any child born to Henry's union with Catherine would inherit both kingdoms. The text of the treaty reads (in part):

15

First it is agreed between our said father of France and us, that for as much as by the bond of matrimony made for the good of peace between us and our most dear and beloved Katherine, daughter of our said father and of our most dear mother Isabel his wife, those same Charles and Isabel are made our father and mother, and honour them as such, and as it fi tteth such and so worthy a prince and princess, to be honoured especially before all other temporal princes of this world …

2

At the same time, instead of demanding a dowry, Henry agreed to fund his queen to the extent 40,000 ecus a year from the realm of England, which amounted to some £7,500; that being what 'Queens of England hitherto were wont to take and have', with an additional 20,000 francs from his lands in France if he should predecease her

.3 The English lands were to be assigned principally out of the Duchy of Cornwall and the Earldom of Chester. The Estates General, the Sorbonne and the City of Paris all endorsed the treaty. A few days later, on 2 June 1420, Henry and Catherine met for the fi rst time and were betrothed. Although Shakespeare's famous account of their meeting is fi ction there does seem to have been a genuine chemistry between them, which was just as well because a few days later they were married. The ceremony was performed in the parish church at Troyes by the Archbishop of Sens and their honeymoon was spent recovering the town of Sens from the Armagnacs, which when taken was restored to the Archbishop with considerable bloodshed. Philip of Burgundy said of Catherine at this point that 'she had passionately longed to be espoused to King Henry, from the moment that she saw him …', which would suggest that she had fi rst set eyes on him at the abortive meeting in 1419, although they had not actually

met.4 After their turbulent honeymoon the bride seems to have returned briefl y to her parents, who were at Bray-sur-Seine, until the time of their state entry into Paris, which occurred in December.

The Treaty of Troyes was a realignment of forces rather than a genuine peace, because the Dauphin remained (understandably) unreconciled and was quite strong enough to continue waging war in

defence of his own position. How, his propagandists complained, could Catherine claim to transmit a claim to the throne of France to her heirs while he was still alive? That was not, of course, the point, because it was Henry who was recognized as Charles's heir, not his daughter. The Salic Law, in any case, would have prohibited any claim transmitted by her but it was a telling point for a French audience anxious to work up a head of steam against the 'betrayal of the fl eur de lys'. So the war continued and although Catherine was established with a generous English household (for which Henry paid) she was not expected to accompany her husband on campaign, remaining instead at Bray-sur-Seine, where Henry was a frequent visitor. Her time came when there were triumphs to be celebrated and, although 16

the Dauphin won some victories against lesser English commanders, the King himself proved well-nigh invincible. He did not need to conquer Paris, but he did need to make his presence felt there; consequently, after several months of campaigning, he made a ceremonial entry, accompanied by his queen in December 1420. They kept Christmas at the Louvre with great pomp. Whatever efforts Henry might have made to teach his wife English – and it would hardly have been necessary because he spoke perfect French – she had not yet visited his homeland. However that was remedied on 27 December when they cut short their Christmas celebrations and set sail for England.

The king was now out to impress. He was 'with triumph come from France'

and was given a suitably enthusiastic welcome by his devoted subjects. In the wake of the Southampton plot, he needed to establish that he was unchallenged in England as well as victorious in France and to impress his wife with the completeness of his contr

ol.5 At the same time (although obviously this was not said) his wife was a trophy of the successful war. She was 19 years old and by all accounts extraordinarily beautiful. They entered London together on 21 February and she was crowned at Westminster on 24 February. This was Catherine's moment of high exposure to the social and political elite of England. Henry deliberately did not attend, leaving her to preside at the coronation banquet and to bear the full weight of the elaborate ceremonial, every last detail of which was solemnly recorded in Fabyan's Chronicle. 6 They then went off on progress to the north of England, where Henry was again at great pains to display his trophy, until Catherine returned to Westminster in May. It must have been during this progress that their child was conceived. Catherine spent the summer and autumn of 1421

becoming more visibly pregnant. With so dominant a husband, she had little political role and seems to have been content to busy herself with works of piety and other 'female concerns', like managing the love affairs of her friend King James of Scotland. It seems that she did not even administer her own estates. No accounts survive to provide an indication, and such evidence as there is suggests that the King's

offi cers continued to be in charge and simply paid over to her Steward the proportion of their revenues that the marriage treaty required. How the Steward then disbursed that money we do not know. Presumably Catherine paid for the staff and upkeep of those houses which had been allocated to her, but whether she was also expected to pay for her residence at court when in her husband's company is not clear. Despite his obligations under the treaty of Troyes, there is no sign that Henry allocated a specifi c estate for her maintenance but rather took revenues from whichever lands happened to be available to make up the required sum. Sometimes these were Duchy lands; at other times the dower lands of the Queen Dowager, Joan of Navarre, seem to hav

e been used.7 By July Henry was

back in France, pursuing the Dauphin along the Loire, where he took Dreux on 8 August. By November Catherine had retreated into the customary seclusion at Windsor, and there on 6 December she was safely delivered of a son.

8 The child lived and flourished and the Queen had performed her most important and inescapable duty. There was an heir to both thrones.

Before Easter she had joined her husband, leaving their son in the safe care of his nursery and they spent the Whitsun time together in Paris, before Henry set off again on campaign. She was, presumably, served by her normal retinue of ladies, whom she would have paid, but for some unknown reason she was also on this occasion accompanied by several additional women whom the King rewarded. Lady Margaret Roos, Elizabeth Fitz Hugh, Catherine Chideock, Joanne Belknap, Joanna Troutbeck and Joanna Carey cost the exchequer an additional

£140, but why they were employed is a mystery and their rewards are listed as 'extraordinary'. Perhaps the King owed their kindreds an obligation. More surprisingly, her confessor, John Boyers, was paid in the same way.

9 This time

Henry had been summoned to relieve a Burgundian garrison at Cosne sur Loire but it soon transpired that the sickness that he had picked up at the fall of Meaux earlier in May was actually dysentery. By the time that he got to Corbeil he was too weak to continue and he had to be carried in a litter to Vincennes, where he died on 31 August. Catherine may or may not have been present (the sources do not agree) but if she were not, this should not be taken to suggest any kind of a rupture between them. Henry had in a sense died on active service, which his consort could not be expected to share. They had been married for a little over two years. The Queen's grief was palpable and we are told 'greatly edified the people'. She conducted his body back to England in a solemn and magnificent cortege, and erected a great tomb in his memory. It might have been expected that after the obsequies, Catherine would have returned to her own family because she was still only 21. However, her father died on 21 October and her brother

was locked in combat with her son's Council for control of the kingdom of France. In the circumstances, home was where her son was, and she remained in England. Soon after the parliament confi rmed her dower at the slightly reduced, but still substantial, fi gure of £6,000 a year, taken mostly from the Duchy of Lancaster and therefore presumably assessed on different lands. No more is heard of the 20,000 francs from France but the provision made was perfectly adequate for a Queen Dowager.

For the next few years, Catherine acted mainly as the mother of her young son. This was a personal, not a political role because, offi cially, the Earl of Warwick was the guardian of the King's person but the Queen Mother appeared regularly with the infant Henry. At the same time England was run by the Council, presided 18

over by the King's uncle, Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, as protector. The French lands were similarly ruled by Humphrey's brother, John Duke of Bedford, who had his own council. Henry was moved around a good deal, partly for the sake of his health and partly to prove to the people that he was still alive and well. Catherine was, however, still only in her mid-twenties and was apparently highly sexed. As one chronicler put it (not too discreetly), she was 'unable fully to control her carnal passions'

.10 There were rumours of an affair with Edmund Beaufort, the nephew of the Cardinal Bishop of Winchester, accompanied inevitably by talk of a marriage, to which the Duke of Gloucester was adamantly opposed. It might have been as much because of this known weakness as because of the need to be near her son that Catherine went on living in the King's household until 1430. Henry VI was crowned in 1429 and this was presumably a rite of passage in more than one sense. He was now in the fullest sense a king but his education would also have moved on, into the hands of male tutors. He was no longer 'living among the women' and his mother was surplus to requirements. Despite the fact that the parliament of 1427–8 had decreed that the Queen Mother could only re-marry with the consent of the Council, Catherine seems to have celebrated her freedom by uniting herself with one of her sewers, a Welsh squire named Owain ap Maredudd ap Tudur.

Owain was the son of Maredudd ap Tudur ap Goronwy of Penmynydd in Anglesey and claimed descent on his mother's side from the princely house of Deheubarth. How he fi rst encountered Catherine is something of a mystery. There are a number of unsubstantiated stories about his youth and upbringing and some of his kindred seem to have been involved in Glyn Dwr's revolt, although Owain himself would have been too young. Perhaps he had some connection with Henry as Prince of Wales although he would only have been about 13 when the latter became King. The fi rst certain thing that is known about him is that he served in the retinue of Sir Walter Hungerford, the steward of the King's household, in France in May 1421. This would suggest that he held some position in that household, although what that might have been, and whether it was on the King's side or the Queen's is not known. Elis Gruffudd, the sixteenth-century Welsh chronicler, says

that he was Catherine's 'sewer and servant' and that is probably correct although it cannot be substantiated. Most likely Owain was a handsome and well set-up young man and the sexually frustrated Catherine fancied him. There is a story that during a dance at court he fell into her lap while trying to execute a diffi cult pirouette but that would seem to be symbolic rather than factual! Under other circumstances she might have simply taken him as a lover but the risk of unattributable pregnancy was simply too great and at some time in 1529 or 1530 they were secretly married.

Her ladies apparently remonstrated with her for lowering herself in ‘paying any attention to a person, who, although possessing some personal accomplishments

… had no princely or even gentle alliance’. Worst of all, he was Welsh. Catherine apparently responded that, being a French woman, she did not understand that there were racial differences within Britain. He summoned some of his more respectable kindred to speak for him – but unfortunately they knew no language but Welsh.

Although after Catherine’s death in 1537 he was disparagingly described in a council minute as ‘Owen Tudor which dwelt with the said Catherine …’ there is no reason to doubt the reality of their marriage. Although it was recorded that

‘the high spirit of the Duke of Gloucester could not brook of her marriage’, it was not openly challenged at the time. Aspersions of bastardy were subsequently cast on both her sons, but that was for transparently political reasons. It was probably when she realized that she was pregnant that Catherine withdrew from court and took up residence at Much Hadham in Hertfordshire, where at some point in 1430 their eldest son, Edmund, was born.

The Queen Mother was understandably concerned to make her position appear as respectable as possible. In 1431 she seems to have arranged for Owain’s pedigree to be presented to the parliament, presumably emphasizing his connection with the quasi-royal house of Deheubarth and in 1432 he was granted letters of denizenship. These he needed, because although he was the King’s subject, being a Welshman he was technically an alien in England and this was at a time when the Glyn Dwr revolt had left a number of anti-Welsh statutes on the record, making it (for example) illegal for a Welshman to hold land in England. By becoming a denizen, Owain became an honorary Englishman, although it is not clear that he ever held any signifi cant property in England. Over the next fi ve years Catherine must have been almost constantly pregnant because she bore Owain three more children: Jasper, who was born at another of her residences, Hatfi eld, at some time in 1432, David, who subsequently became a monk at Westminster and an unnamed daughter who seems to have died in infancy. Apart from motherhood, it is not clear how

Catherine spent her time at this stage of her life. Her son, the King, seems to have regarded her with warm affection, and just a few days before her death, sent her a New Year's gift of 'a tablet of gold with a crucifi x, garnished with saphire' and valued at £40.

11 She was also much prayed for, even during her lifetime, which suggests a charitable disposition and involvement in works of piety. Towards the end of her life, and probably after she was already ill, her children were assigned to the care of a sister of the Earl of Suffolk. This was undoubtedly intended as a snub to Owain and must have caused the ailing Queen Mother considerable distress but we have no

direct evidence of her reaction. She seems to have retired to Bermondsey Abbey some months before her death and might have had some thoughts of taking the veil, but it was there, on 3 January 1437, that she died. Her will, which survives, is a very curious document. The king, who was still technically a minor, was made sole executor, her servants were to be paid, and masses said for her soul, but nothing was said either about her younger children or about her h

usband.12

Perhaps some traces of her father's incapacity were affl icting Catherine towards the end of her life, or perhaps some rupture with her husband had put her in a state of denial. The fact that she was in Bermondsey Abbey at all suggests that something like that had happened. In any case she died as Queen Dowager and a princess of France – not as Mrs Owain Tudur.

Her death at fi rst left her husband dangerously exposed. In July he was summoned before the Council but signifi cantly declined to come without a safe conduct from the King that 'he should come and freely go'. This was granted, but honoured in the breach rather than the observance, for on his way home he was arrested and consigned to Newgate. Later in the year, as one chronicler disparagingly put it:

One Owen, a man of neither birth nor livelihood, broke out of Newgate at searching time. The which Owen had wedded with Queen Katherine and had three or four children by her unknown to the common people until she was dead and buried …

He was re-arrested and sent to Windsor Castle, where he might have remained had not his stepson intervened. In 1439 he was pardoned and his goods and lands (valued at £137 a year) were restored to him. Henry then awarded him an annuity of £40 a year 'by special grace' and, although he gave him no offi ce or responsibility, Owain proved to be a loyal servant of the Lancastrian cause in the forthcoming civil strife. He was eventually captured and executed after the Yorkist victory at Mortimer's cross in 1461. He was buried in the Greyfriars church at Hereford, where his bastard son David (an afterthought born in 1459) subsequently erected a memorial.

His sons by Catherine, Edmund, who was aged about 7 at his mother's death, Jasper, who was 5, and the other David, who was about 3, do not seem to have been in their father's custody at any point. Whether their allocation to the care of the Earl of Suffolk's sister ever took effect we do not know but probably not because soon after Catherine's death they were placed with the Abbess of Barking and later with certain 'virtuous and holy priests'. The King assumed full responsibility for them and never attempted to deny that they were his kindred. They were educated in the royal household in a manner suitable to their status and Edmund was knighted on the 15 December 1449.

13 He was presumably

21

brought up, at least in part, to be a soldier but it was in recognition of his royal blood rather than for service that he was created Earl of Richmond on 23

November 1452, with precedence ov

er all other earls.14 He was also recognized as the King's half brother at the Reading parliament of 1453. Because of that status he was granted in that year the wardship of the 10-year-old Margaret, the daughter of John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, whom two years later he married. By 1456 he was fi ghting with the Lancastrian forces in Wales but was defeated by Sir William Herbert and died of the plague at Carmarthen in November of that year. His young bride gave birth to a posthumous son on 28 January 1457, who was subsequently to be King Henry VII.

As King, Henry demolished and rebuilt the chapel at Westminster Abbey where Catherine was buried. In referring to his intention to translate the remains of his uncle, King Henry VI, to the new chapel, he also mentioned 'the body of our Grand dam of right noble memory, Queen Katherine daughter of the King of France' as being interred in the same place. Unfortunately, when he himself came to be buried there his 'grand dam of right noble memory' was disinterred and not reburied. She seems to have remained above ground until the early nineteenth century, and in the seventeenth her body was something of a tourist attraction. After this ultimate indignity it is to be hoped that she rests in peace.

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2

The Queen as Dominatrix: Margaret of Anjou

The circumstances of Henry VI's marriage to Margaret of Anjou could hardly have been more different from those of 1420. Then Henry V had been in control of the situation and had been able to bring his bride back to England as one of the spoils of victory. In 1444 the English were on the back foot, struggling to maintain their position in France and anxious to salvage the best peace that they could. For a

few years after 1422 the young King's uncle, John, Duke of Bedford, had maintained a semblance of dominance but failure at Orleans and the subsequent crowning of the 'roi de Bourges'

as King Charles VII of France had turned the political tide. The Burgundian alliance was already problematic as Duke Philip reassessed his priorities and after the death of his sister Anne, the Duchess of Bedford, in November 1432, it was effectively dead. In 1435 Bedford himself died, and Philip formally came to terms with Charles at Arras. Thereafter the English were clearly on the retreat, and this was a situation not helped by divided councils. The King's surviving uncle, Humphrey of Gloucester, was committed to the defence of the French lands, but although he held the formal precedence of Protector, his infl uence was in fact seriously challenged by Henry Beaufort the Cardinal Bishop of Winchester and large scale creditor of the Crown. Beaufort was not interested in the defence of France and as the King emerged from childhood into adolescence, he increasingly sympathized with the Cardinal's priorities. By the end of 1443 the English were concentrating their efforts on the defence of Calais and Normandy, and Francis I, the Duke of Brittany who had his own interests to protect against the resurgent power of Charles VII, was offering to mediate peace.

Charles, for his part, was willing to negotiate. His recent agreement with the Duke of Burgundy was already beginning to unravel and it seems that he was anxious to put the English war on hold while he dealt with Philip, in alliance with Duke Renée of Anjou. Renée was motivated by the desire to liquidate his obligation to pay Philip the balance of the enormous ransom that had been demanded on his release from Burgundian captivity in 1437. Although titular king of Naples, Sicily and Jerusalem and strongly connected at court, Renée was not in fact a particularly imposing ally but he was conveniently

available – and he had a motive. Moreover Marie, Renée's sister, was Charles's queen. Since the King of England was unmarried, and of a marriageable age, it was natural for the King of France to seek that route to peace with England, and it seems that the original proposal came from the French side. Because Charles had no desire to give any pretext for a son of the marriage to renew his claims to the French throne, his own daughters were not on offer and the bride suggested was Margaret, the 14-year-old second daughter of his ally, Duke Renée. Margaret was suitable from the English point of view because she was of royal blood, the right age, and came of a proven breeding stock – she had several brothers as well as an older sister. She was appropriate from the French point of view precisely because she was not a great heiress and carried almost no political baggage. Although the military situation was not at that point particularly threatening, in January 1444 the English council decided to negotiate and at the beginning of February Henry sent the Earl of Suffolk to France to represent him. Suffolk was the King's personal choice and it was not a wise one as the Earl himself appreciated. He had been involved in Anglo-French peace feelers before and for that reason the French had specifi cally asked for him but the numerous French contacts that he had already established left him short of credibility in the eyes of Gloucester's supporters. They suspected that he would prove a 'soft touch' and he was worried lest a successful mission should be seen in that light.

It was already a concession on the English side to be discussing Margaret at all, not least because her dowry was likely to be negligible and any further concessions would seriously undermine the credibility of the whole exercise. Nevertheless, that is what happened. By 20 May it was clear that the English would be able to secure neither a full peace nor recognition of their existing position in France. Given his apprehensions of precisely such an outcome, Suffolk should probably have broken off the negotiation and come home. However, perhaps because he knew the King's mind, he settled for a two-year general truce in order to secure the marriage. His thinking seems to have been that once Margaret was in England as Queen, it would be relatively easy to turn the truce into a full peace. In any case, there had not even been a truce since Henry V's death, so that was an achievement of a kind. On 22 May a formal betrothal ceremony took place in St

Martin's cathedral at Tours, presided over by the papal Legate, the Bishop of Brescia, and in the presence of Charles, Renée, their wives and a large concourse of French nobility. Suffolk acted as proxy for the King of England. The Earl and his entourage returned to England immediately after the ceremony, and were greeted by Henry with extravagant enthusiasm. It was not the least of that monarch's many misjudgements to have undervalued himself in such a fashion but Suffolk was generously rewarded and in September raised

to a marquisate. Towards the end of the year the new marquis led a much larger and more formal mission back to France, including a number of noble ladies led by Jaquetta of Luxembourg, the dowager Duchess of Bedford, for the purpose of escorting Henry's bride to her new kingdom.

1 He was also charged to resume the peace negotiations, which had been suspended with the conclusion of the truce. It was to prove an expensive and protracted mission, which lasted until the following April, but the peace negotiations made no further progress and that was to prove an ominous failure.

Suffolk found the French Court at Nancy in December, from where Charles was busying himself about the siege of the Duke of Burgundy's stronghold at Metz. Both the French king and his ally may have been distracted by this circumstance, because it was February before Margaret fi nally put in an appearance. The delay caused rumours to circulate in England that the young queen was being withheld in order to extract further concessions from the pliable Suffolk. Specifi cally he was later accused of having promised to cede Henry's claims to Anjou and Maine to Duke Renée. There appears to have been no truth in these innuendoes, which were spread by Suffolk's political enemies, and relations continued to be friendly, but the long delay in Margaret's arrival inevitably aroused suspicions. Once she appeared, however, affairs proceeded with reasonable expedition. The wedding was celebrated at Nancy on 2 March, with Suffolk again standing in for Henry, and then the English set off for home.

2 The journey was slow and the bride tearful at the prospect of leaving her family and friends. The party reached Pontoise on 18 March and that was the last Valois held town on their route. There they were met by Henry's lieutenant and governor in France, the Duke of York and most of the French contingent said their farewells. A few, including of course several young women, were to accompany the Queen to England. Margaret may already have been suffering from homesickness, or possibly chagrin, and she did not appear either at Rouen or at Harfl eur on the way, although state entries had been arranged at both. She was still suffering from some indeterminate ailment, which was probably made worse by seasickness, when she

landed in England on 14 April.

It is claimed that Henry, in an unaccustomed gesture of chivalric enterprise, bore a letter to her disguised as a squire immediately after her landing. She did not, of course, recognize him (never having set eyes on the King of England) and he was apparently less than impressed.

3 Although one contemporary (admittedly French) declared that ‘there was no princess in Christendom more accomplished than my lady Marguerite of Anjou [who] was already renowned in France for her beauty and her wit’, most evidence does not confi rm that she was a great beauty. Nevertheless, preparations for her second and fi nal wedding proceeded apace, 26

the precaution having already been taken to secure a dispensation for a marriage in Lent, and duly took place at Titchfi eld Abbey on 22 April. The celebrant was William Aincough, Bishop of Salisbury, and this time the King spok

e for himself.4

To mark the occasion the new Queen was apparently presented with a lion, which was promptly consigned to the menagerie at the Tower in the care of two grooms and at a cost of £2 5s 3d. As soon as the ceremony was over Henry headed back to Westminster to prepare for her entry into London and coronation, leaving Margaret in the care of Cardinal Beaufort, Suffolk's friend and a warm supporter of the peace with France. She proceeded to Eltham by comfortable stages and entered London on 28 May. Her reception had been carefully orchestrated as a celebration of peace and concord, with the Queen herself as the dove. She was crowned at Westminster two days later. As with Catherine, a quarter of a century earlier, the King did not appear, leaving his consort as the focus of all attention. Given that she was in a strange land and only 16 years old, she seems to have coped remarkably we

ll.5

However, in using his bride in this way, the King was giving hostages to fortune. Supposing that the peace negotiations did not succeed? In that event there was a risk that his dove of peace would turn into a raven of discord. Even the Marquis of Suffolk was sceptical of success and took pains to warn the House of Commons on 2 June that a favourable outcome was by no means assured.

6 He was also anxious to refute the claims that were already being made, that he had offered unauthorized concessions. He had, he insisted, made no such offers but had confi ned himself strictly within the limits set out in the King's instructions. As a precaution, he insisted that his protestation be minuted, which was duly done (and is the reason why we know about it). At the same time, the feuding within the English Council was refl ected in a public discourse that represented the Queen as symbol of surrender and mocked her father who, for all his extravagant pretensions, was unable to provide a

suitable dowry for his daughter. As the duration of the truce ticked away the negotiations became increasingly urgent, but all that they achieved was an extension of the truce. The discussions were friendly enough but the negotiating positions on both sides were intractable. Militarily, the French had the upper hand and were not disposed to make any concessions; specifi cally they would not admit English claims to Normandy. The English, on the defensive, were caught between Henry's urgent desire for peace and the political storm that any further concessions would arouse. They could not yield ground either. The embassies came and went. A meeting between the Kings was promoted, agreed, postponed and postponed again. Meanwhile Margaret, whose personal investment in a successful outcome was considerable, was doing her best. Writing to her uncle in December 1445, she offered to 'employ

herself effectually' in the cause of peace 'in such wise that you and all others, ought herein to be gratifi ed'.

7 On 22 December, Henry proceeded to make the unilateral gesture that is usually attributed to Margaret's infl uence. He renounced his claim to the duchy of Maine in favour of Renée. This was not done through formal negotiation and undermined the position that his delegates were trying to sustain; moreover it brought peace no nearer and served merely to confi rm the impression in England that the French were not interested in a settlement on any reasonable terms. Margaret was blamed for this surrender and those who had seen her arrival as symbolic of submission appeared to be justifi ed. As her arch critic, Thomas Gascoinge, wrote:

this king of England, Henry VI, granted and gave Maine and Anjou at the request of his Queen, Margaret, daughter of the Duke of Lorraine who calls himself King of Sicily …

and that aforesaid Queen of ours begged the King of England that [they] so be given to her father at the urging of William Pole, Duke of Suffolk and his wife who earlier had promised to re

quest it.8

This was written well after the event and was a slander on Suffolk but it expresses a widely held view, both at the time and later. By the end of 1445, the Queen's traditional function as a mediatrix between her husband and her father's kindred had turned sour indeed. The harder she tried and the more successful her efforts, the more unpopular she was likely to become. Had she fulfi lled her primary duty and started bearing Henry children the criticism might have been more muted but that did not happen. There does not appear to have been anything wrong with their relationship. Despite Henry's later mental problems and his reputation for extreme piety, at this stage his health and his sexual interest in his wife appear to have been entirely normal. It was just that she did not conceive – and this of course provoked the gossips no less than her peacemaking activities. There is little doubt that during the early days of her marriage, Margaret was a victim of Henry's political enemies, because apart from some ineffectual attempts to promote the peace negotiations, she had no public role.

The surrender of Maine in return for an extension of the truce was critical in this respect. Not only was the Queen now represented as dominating her feeble husband but she was also using that control to diminish his honour rather than to enhance it. Shortly after it was being publicly said

that the king was fi tter for a cloister than a throne, and had in a manner deposed himself by leaving the affairs of his kingdom in the hands of a woman, who merely used his name to conceal her usurpation, since, in accordance with the laws of England, a queen consort hath no power,

but title only …9

This was an opinion which was to be voiced with increasing insistence over the coming years and it was not good for the credibility of the regime. By this time also the divisions within the Council and among the English nobility were assuming dangerous proportions. At the end of December 1446 the Duke of York was replaced as governor in France by Edmund Beaufort, Marquis of Dorset, the Cardinal's nephew, and the Duke of Gloucester was arrested and charged with treason at the parliament that was held at Bury St Edmunds in January 1447. The parliament had been carefully convened in a place far from Gloucester's main bases of support and he would almost certainly have been convicted but he spared them the embarrassment of a trial by dying (apparently of natural causes) on the 23 February.

10 All these developments were factional moves against the leading opponents of that conciliatory policy in France, which was fronted by the Marquis of Suffolk, but which was, it seems, really the policy of Henry VI and his queen. It may be signifi cant that the English establishment in Normandy were strongly opposed to York's removal. At the same time the English offi cials in Maine were dragging their feet and at least two deadlines for the handover passed with nothing accomplished. Commissioners were appointed to accomplish the handover but even they prevaricated and Dorset, who had issued the formal instructions, seems to have been convinced that the surrender was a mistake. By March 1448 Charles was becoming exasperated, and deployed a show of force against Le Mans. This did the trick, and on 15 March Maine was fi nally ceded, amongst bitter recriminations on the English side.11 This surrender did little to promote the still-fl agging peace negotiations but it did enhance the careers of two of those who were now Henry's most trusted advisers. In March Edmund Beaufort was created Duke of Somerset, and in June William de la Pole was raised from the Marquisate of Suffolk to a Dukedom. With Richard of York having been shunted off to Ireland and Humphrey of Gloucester dead, the King's failure to maintain a balance within his council was becoming increasingly clear. The ineptitude of English policy in France at this point beggars belief because the 'peace party', having secured its domination of the King's Council and surrendered any initiative in negotiation, attempted to recover its position by breaking the long standing truce. In March 1449 a mercenary captain in English service seized the town and fortress of Fougères on the

Breton border. The story of this escapade is immensely complicated but de Surienne seems to have acted with the full complicity of the English governor, although the motivation for the attack remains obscure. It may have been intended to intimidate the Duke of Brittany or to inject some much-needed credibility into the English negotiating position. It seems to have been intended as little more than a gesture because, having carried out his attack, de Surienne was left to his own devices and the

town was soon recaptur

ed.12 However, Charles understandably regarded it as unprovoked aggression and, picking up what he saw as a challenge, launched his armies against Normandy. On 10 November 1449 Rouen fell, and the English position in northern France collapsed completely. Attempts were made to send reinforcements, but these were frustrated by a shortage of munitions and a lack of money. With the fall of Caen in January 1450, the only English foothold left outside of Gascony was Calais.

The repercussions of this disaster were immediate. Unable to blame the King directly, the Duke of Suffolk became the scapegoat. The House of Commons seized upon the confession made

in extremis by Adam Moleyns, the Keeper of the Privy Seal, who had been murdered at Portsmouth early in January, to frame a variety of charges against him, and he was impeached on the 7 February. A total of eight articles were framed, including responsibility for the surrender of Maine and Anjou, but his real crime was his failure to secure Normandy – in spite of the fact that he had never held the governorship, which had gone from the Duke of York to the Duke of Somerset some time before. The King tried to have the charges respited but the Commons were insistent and were strongly supported outside Parliament. Had Suffolk been tried, he would almost certainly have been found guilty; in order to prevent this, Henry stepped in and banished his friend for fi ve years. He did this unilaterally, without any consultation or process of law. On his way into exile in May the Duke was seized at sea and summarily executed. 13 Before his elevation to the marquisate, William de la Pole had been Steward of the Household and he, together with Adam Moleyns, had come to symbolize that household dominance of the Council that was so bitterly and widely resented. Now both of them had died at the hands of assassins and when Jack Cade's men rose in rebellion in Kent later in 1450, household government was among their leading grievances, 'the law' they declared bitterly, 'serveth for nought else but to do wrong'.14

All this lightning was striking close to the Queen. She had been a friend of Suffolk's because he had so patiently negotiated for her

marriage and Alice, his wife, was one of her ladies. The Duke of Somerset was also a friend who had performed many good offi ces for her. Her position made it inevitable that her closest associates would be those household offi cers who, in 1450, were being so much vilifi ed. Cade's supporters had the Duchess of Suffolk and William Booth, Margaret's Chancellor, on their 'hit list', as well as the Duke of Somerset. Despite this and her reputation, her political role at this stage was in fact negligible. Her endowment of 10,000 marks (£6,600) a year made her a very rich woman and she was a generous patron, running a large household of her own. In 1447 she petitioned her husband for permission to found a new college in Cambridge 30

on the grounds that the university had seen ‘no college founded by any Queen of England hithertoward’. The foundation stone of Queens’ college was laid on 15 April 1448. A sizeable collection of her letters show her working hard on behalf of clients – sometimes her own servants, sometimes others who had sought her intercession. She secured benefi ces for her chaplains and confessors, offi ces for lay petitioners and lucrative marriages for her ladies – or at least for those who were not already wed. The King in turn was generous to her. Realizing that the fi nancial diffi culties of the Crown had somewhat reduced her dower, in 1446 he settled on her for life an additional £2,000 worth of lands, drawn mainly from the Duchy of Lancaster and comprising the Honours of Tutbury, Leicester and Kenilworth.

15 This was also given precedence over all other Duchy grants, an additional security if times should become still harder. Margaret also received a number of rich wardships and other lucrative privileges and concessions. This did not make her popular with other disappointed petitioners, although it was hardly her fault. Cade did not directly attack her but many of his shots came close and almost her only known political intervention came in connection with that rebellion. Realizing (perhaps better than Henry) the seriousness of the threat that he represented and the importance of some kind of conciliation, she urged the general pardon that the King issued on 6 July 1450 – although whether she did it as a kneeling supplicant, with her hair unbound in the classical pose of the mediatrix, we do not know.

Although Henry and Margaret spent a great deal of time together and celebrated most of the major feasts in each other’s company, the years passed without any sign of the longed-for pregnancy. Inevitably there were mutterings that ‘she was none able to be queen of England … for because she beareth no child …’

16 but eventually, in the spring of 1453 and after nearly eight years of marriage, the feat was accomplished and Margaret conceived. There was great rejoicing, in which the King joined, but then, when she was about six-months’

pregnant, disaster struck. Earlier in the year the King had appeared to be in good health and good spirits. At the end of April he had been

intending to make an extended progress to pacify some of the discontents which were plainly visible but by the end of July news had been received of the crushing defeat at Castillon in Gascony and of the deaths of the English commanders, the Earl of Shrewsbury and his son. Nobody knows whether this news (which presaged the end of English Gascony) drove Henry over some hitherto unsuspected edge but within a few days he was in the grip of a mysterious condition, which it has been suggested may have been catatonic schizophrenia. Bereft of speech and of all understanding, he became a kind of vegetable. Nobody knew what to do, either medically or politically and for several weeks it was hoped that he

would recover as quickly as he had succumbed. It was in these circumstances, on 13 October 1453 that Margaret was delivered of a son, who was promptly named Edward, after the Confessor whose translation feast it was. Archbishop Kemp, the Duke of Somerset and the Duchess of Buckingham stood as his godparents. We do not know whether the Queen might have taken a political stance in other circumstances. As it was the circumstances of her confi nement and convalescence effectively took her out of the equation – for the time being. Margaret's household accounts for this period survive among the records of the Duchy of Lancaster, and we know (for example) that her chancellor Lawrence Booth was paid £53 a year and that she was spending no more than £7 a day on feeding her servants and herself. One intriguing entry records that she gave the generous sum of £200 to one of her ladies on the occasion of her marriage. It has been speculated that this young lady was Elizabeth Woodville, who was one of her attendants and who married at about this time. Certainly 'Isabella, Lady Grey' (her married name) features among the Queen's attendants not long after. Because the birth of Edward so adversely affected the prospects of the Duke of York, it was to be expected that Yorkist rumours would surround her delivery. The child was not Henry's; alternatively the real child had been born dead and the King's supposed heir was a changeling. Margaret knew of these slanders and did not forget them but they made no difference to her political position. Although nothing was said about the King's condition when Parliament reassembled in November, it was clear by then that some interim arrangement for the government of the realm was unavoidable. A Great Council was called on 12 November and, as soon as it assembled, it became clear that the Duke of Somerset, bereft of the King's support, was in deep trouble. The Duke of Norfolk accused him of treason with reference to the fi ascos in France and he was arrested and conveyed to the Tower

.17 While Somerset was still in charge an attempt had been made to exclude the Duke of York from the Council but York was a prince of the blood, who had been Henry's putative heir and Norfolk favoured him. The suggestion was raised that he should be made protector of the realm for the duration of the King's illness, but this was immediately challenged by Margaret who in January 1454, with the full backing of Henry's household offi cers, put forward her own claim

to the regency. As one observer wrote: the Queen hath made a bill of fi ve articles, desiring those articles to be granted: whereof the fi rst is that she desireth to have the whole rule of this land; the second is that she may make the Chancellor, Treasurer, the Privy Seal and all other offi cers of this land …18

Although she had her supporters outside the household, this was a demand of revolutionary implications and where the idea came from remains a mystery. 32

During the recent precedent of Henry's own minority, no one (least of all Catherine herself) had suggested the Queen Mother as Regent – nor had Isabella made any such claim during the frequent illnesses of Charles VII. It seems that motherhood had transformed a fairly conventional, not to say ornamental, consort, into a determined and ambitious player in the dangerous game of power politics. The unprecedented and unexpected nature of this bid played into the hands of the Duke of York, who was clearly determined to use the King's illness as a pretext to establish and secure his own position and those of his 'well willers'. He was nominated to open Parliament on the King's behalf on 14 February 1454

and that was a step in the desired direction, but the death of John Kempe, the Archbishop of Canterbury, on 22 March, forced the issue. A new appointment was urgent and only the King or his designated replacement could nominate. On 28 March a fi nal attempt was made to get some sense out of Henry when Margaret brought in his infant son to receive his blessing. When that failed, on 3 April, York was appointed Protector on the same terms that Humphrey of Gloucester had enjoyed 32 years earlier. The Queen's bid appears to have been simply ignored. That, as it was to turn out, was a serious mistake. The Duke of York went through the motions of reluctance to accept the appointment but in fact he was highly gratifi ed and immediately secured the appointment of his brother-in-law, the Earl of Salisbury, to the vacant chancellorship. His position was not strong enough to enable him to remodel the Council and all the remaining offi cers continued in post, but Salisbury was a valuable ally. His other appointments were not numerous, or obviously partisan, and the translation of Thomas Bourgchier from Ely to Canterbury, which occurred at some time after 23 April, introduced a noticeably conciliatory voice. The most obvious focus of opposition was the royal household, now controlled by Margaret, but beyond a little trimming for fi nancial reasons he was not strong enough to attack it. After all, the King might recover at any moment. Beside which, he had other priorities. Apart from Calais, English France was lost and the whole coastline in enemy hands because, despite the defeats, there was still no peace. Unpaid, the garrison of Calais mutinied and there were unresolved aristocratic faction fi ghts going on all over England. In Ireland, too, York had diffi culty in restoring the authority that he had

formerly exercised there. This turbulent situation exposed the protector's limitations, and it has been fairly claimed that he acted less like a surrogate king, determined to impose impartial justice, and more like the leader of a magnate faction concerned to consolidate his position. Only in the north of England did he have any success in bringing peace and that was by supporting the Nevilles in their bid to destroy the Percies. In other words, it was a factional victory.

Then, at Christmas 1454, Henry recovered as suddenly as he had collapsed; or at least, he recovered suffi ciently to resume his formal duties. He is reported to have been as a man awakening from a deep sleep, delighted to see his son (now 15 months old), and curious to know what had happened during his

illness.19 Whether he ever recovered fully is a moot point because, although he remained occasionally determined to assert himself, both his willpower and his judgement seem to have been permanently impaired. The immediate consequence was the release of the Duke of Somerset, although apparently strict conditions were applied, which should have kept him out of the political arena. At some time in February 1455 the Duke of York resigned his powers into the King's hands and, on 4 March, Somerset's sureties were discharged and the charges against him dismissed. The court party swiftly augmented its strength on the council, and the new chancellor was dismissed in favour of the Archbishop of Canterbury. By April the Duke of York and his friends had every reason to fear a regime of partisan revenge and when a Great Council was summoned to Leicester on 21 May, they abruptly withdrew from the court, fearing punitive measures against them. This was tantamount to an act of rebellion, and when the court was on its way to Leicester it was intercepted by York and Warwick with a retinue of some 4,000 armed men. On the court side, Buckingham and Somerset were also 'well accompanied' and the result was the fi rst battle of St Albans on 22 May. The courtiers were routed and the Duke of Somerset was killed. Henry was present in person and, after the battle, was honourably conducted to the Abbey, where the Duke of York renewed his homage and fealty. 20 Where Margaret may have been is not apparent but after the battle she retreated to Greenwich. The Duke of York's supporters justifi ed his action on the grounds that 'the government, as it was managed by the Queen, the Duke of Somerset and their friends, had been of late a great oppression and injustice to the people …' but there are no contemporary complaints to

that effect.21

It must have seemed that York's domination of the Council would now be secure, but the situation was not in fact so simple. Despite his

undoubted feebleness, the King could not now be ignored, as he had been at the height of his illness. Nor was York in a position to displace those offi cers who had been appointed earlier in the year. Most important of all, the death of the Duke of Somerset had left the leadership of the court party in doubt. There was no favourite of suffi cient status. In theory the King himself was the leader, but in practice it was now his strong-minded spouse. As Sir John Bocking wrote on 9 February 1456: ‘The Queen is a great and strong laboured woman, for she spareth no pain to sue her things to an intent and conclusion to her power …’

Consequently, although the Duke of York was again made protector in November 1455, he soon found himself in the impossible position of being confronted by a political adversary who had unique access to the monarch and who could not be removed by any means short of assassination. He resigned the protectorship on 25 February 1456 and Margaret embarked upon a three-year period of unoffi cial but very real power. As long as Henry was King she would be

alter rex. Between the summer of 1456 and the summer of 1459 the court spent almost half its time within her power base in the West Midlands. It was at Coventry in October 1456 that Archbishop Bourgchier was dispossessed of the Great Seal in favour of William Waynefl ete and Henry Viscount Bourgchier was replaced as Treasurer by the Earl of Salisbury.22 At the same time Lawrence Booth became Keeper of the Privy Seal. Waynefl ete was the King's confessor and Booth the Queen's Chancellor. Although Archbishop Bourgchier was not a party man, his displacement was a partisan move, as were the other appointments. The Great Council duly confi rmed these offi cers, but Margaret's fi ngerprints are all over this. Members of the Council were expected to show the same deference to her as they did to the King and on formal occasions the King's sword was borne before her. When the royal couple entered Coventry (again) in September 1457

Henry was almost invisible behind the pomp that accompanied the Queen. There was no institutional basis and no theoretical justifi cation for such pretensions. Margaret used Edward's Council as Prince of Wales and her own stake in the duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster but for the most part she relied upon sheer will power and strength of character. Although it was the basis of her power, no concept of the consort's position had ever envisaged such a situation. Only the accepted principle that it was the consort's duty to uphold the honour of her Lord lent any support to her position and that had always been understood in a quite different sense. Of course, she had allies and resources. Humphrey Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, John Talbot, Earl of Salisbury, and Thomas, Lord Stanley were all close associates. The overstrained Exchequer could be (to some extent) relieved by using the revenues assigned to Edward, by this time a child of about 5. Margaret's implacable hostility to the Duke of York may have been partly personal, because both had abrasive personalities, but it may

also have been dynastic. York was a Prince of the Blood, who had generally been recognized as Henry's heir before the birth of the Prince of Wales and would be so again if the Prince should meet with any kind of accident. There is no evidence that York had any designs on the Crown before 1457 but the Queen was sharply suspicious and defensive of her son's position – so defensive, indeed, that the Duke and his affi nity decided eventually that the only solution to her intransigence was a complete change of regime. She was almost equally fi erce against the Earl of

Warwick and that was to have serious implications in due course. Although some of Margaret's aggressive assertiveness has come to us through the medium of Yorkist propaganda, there is plenty of contemporary evidence of the perception that she was the real ruler of England; 'every lord in England at this time durst not disobey the Queen, for she ruled all that was done about the King, which was a good, simple and innoc

ent man …'23 Her advocacy of Lawrence Booth for the vacant see of Durham in 1457 was nothing if not preremptory. By comparison, Henry appears a man bemused, most notably in public for his passivity, and in private for an almost pathetic desire to reconcile the controversies with which he was surrounded. He was nothing like as hostile to York as Margaret but he seems to have been consistently overruled by her urgent representations. When the French attacked Sandwich in August 1457 (just to remind the English that there was still a war on), Henry did insist on the court returning to Westminster, but far too late for any effective countermeasures to be taken. His greatest effort to effect reconciliation was the so-called 'love day' of 25 March 1458, which succeeded to the extent of persuading Margaret and York to process hand in hand, but in the event solved nothing.

The partisan nature of the regime was by this time not only obvious but blatant. Neither the Duke of York nor his followers were either admitted to the Council or received any kind of favour. As one observer put it '… my lord of York hath been with the king, and is departed again in right good conceit with the King, but not in great conceit with the Queen …' And therein lay the rub. Henry continued in his ineffectual way to seek some sort of conciliation, but Margaret would have none of it, and she was by this time clearly the dominant partner in the relationship. So the situation continued to deteriorate until the court left again for Coventry in the spring of 1459. By this time someone had decided that the time had come to force an issue. It was not the King, and the suspicion naturally points to Margaret but she may, in this case, have been persuaded by some of her own more extreme supporters. Whoever was responsible, at the Great Council held in Coventry in June 1459, the Duke of York and his leading adherents were indicted for treason. This was, as it may have been intended to be, the signal for a full-scale military confrontation. The

two sides were reasonably well matched both in terms of magnates and of the retinues of which both armies were comprised. On 23 September the Lancastrians were defeated at Bloreheath, but about three weeks later were victorious at Ludlow. As Agnes Strickland somewhat melodramatically put it, ‘the martial blood of Charlemagne was fl owing in [Margaret’s] veins’. With the situation thus stalemated, a parliament was convened at Coventry on 20 November, which duly convicted the indicted lords, and on 11 December all those lords who were gathered at Coventry, which meant most of the court

faction, swore a special oath, not only to the King, but also to the Queen and the Prince of Wales. Henry's crown was now clearly at stake.

York, meanwhile, had returned to Ireland, where his position was unaffected by his attainder. The Earl of Ormond and Wiltshire had been appointed in his place but the King's writ no longer ran in Ireland and the parliament there continued to support the Duke. His son, the Earl of March, with other Yorkist leaders, took refuge with the Earl of Warwick in Calais, where the King's writ did not run either. Plainly the realm was now falling apart. On 26 June 1460, March and his colleagues returned to England in force and, after some deliberation, they were welcomed into London. Bypassing the Tower, which was held against them, they set out to fi nd the King at Northampton. There they defeated Henry's forces on 10 July, killing the Duke of Buckingham in the process, and brought the King back to London. Although he was helpless and virtually a prisoner, their intention seems to have been to renew their allegiance and merely to enforce the repeal of the attainders against them. However, his son's victory brought the Duke of York back from Ireland with a very different agenda. Parliament had been summoned to meet on 7 October, and on 10 October the Duke made a formal claim to the throne on the ground of lineage alone, without reference to Henry's incapacity

.24 To his evident surprise, the assembled Lords and Commons did not accept his claim, pointing out the oaths that had been taken to Henry

– and to Prince Edward. However, there was no gainsaying the strength of his position, and on 31 October a compromise was agreed whereby Henry would retain the Crown for life, but York would be recognized as his heir in place of the Prince of W

ales.25 That the King accepted this was more a refl ection of his weak understanding than of his weak position, because the attitude of the Lords, in particular, had indicated that a more robust defence might have produced a very different outcome. But why should anyone risk defending a position that the principal had already surrendered?

After Henry's capture at Northampton, Margaret and Edward escaped

and fl ed to Denbigh in north Wales, and from there retreated into Scotland. Within a few months the Queen's worst fears were confi rmed. Henry had (in a sense) defended his own position but had totally failed to defend his son's. Whatever respect Margaret might have had for her husband had by now disappeared. She had for some time been the real leader of the Lancastrian party and now she was that formidable animal – a mother in defence of her child. The Duke of York made the serious mistake of thinking that his cause was now won and underestimated both the Queen and her ability to inspire devoted service. He went to the north of England inadequately supported and was defeated and killed at Wakefi eld on 30 December by a Lancastrian army. Despite Shakespeare's dramatic presentation

of the scene, Margaret was not present at Wakefi eld, and was responsible for Richard's death only in the most general sense.

26 She was, however, now in the ascendant, and returned to England at the head of a mixed army of Scots and the affi nities of the northern lords. Marching south, she defeated the Earl of Warwick in a second battle at St Albans on 17 February 1461 and regained control of the King. This was symbolically important because she was still, of course, operating in his name but for all the input which he was now capable of making, she might just as well not have bothered. A stark choice had now been exposed. Did the English want to be ruled by a maverick Frenchwoman in the name of her 8-year-old son or by the Earl of March, the Duke of York's eldest son who had now inherited his claim?

It was the City of London that made the critical move. Alarmed at the thought of a northern invasion, and by reports of indiscipline in the Queen's army, the citizens refused to admit her

.27 Unable either to take the city or to sustain herself in the hostile environment of the home counties, Margaret withdrew northwards. This was the signal for the Yorkists to rally and many waverers seem to have joined them on the grounds that oaths taken to Henry were now meaningless because of his supine attitude. The Earl of March was proclaimed king as Edward IV in London on 4 March, amid general acclamations. At Towton, on 29 March, he caught up with Margaret's retreating army and totally defeated it. The Queen, taking Henry and Edward with her, escaped again into Scotland. The god of battles had now spoken to the satisfaction of enough of the lords of England to enable Edward to be crowned at Westminster on 28 June 1461.

This was not the end of the war and certainly not of Margaret's involvement but it did represent a critical turning point. From now on Henry's court, in so far as it existed, was a court in exile, dependent upon the hospitality of foreign rulers who might wish to use it for their own purposes. At the same time the Queen's substantial revenues disappeared almost overnight, leaving her similarly dependent. It was Margaret's misfortune that the supportive James II of Scotland had died in 1460, leaving his young son in the hands of his mother, Mary

of Gueldres. Consequently, although the ex-Queen managed to arrange the handover of Berwick to the Scots in April 1461 and apparently promised Carlisle also in return for aid, nothing was forthcoming apart from some rather grudging hospitality. Margaret is alleged to have secured a betrothal between her 8-year-old son and the even younger sister of the new King of Scots but nothing came of it. At the same time Charles VII of France, who might have been willing to help, died on 22 July 1461 and his successor, Louis XI, was much more problematic to deal with. Nevertheless in April 1462, leaving Henry in Scotland, Margaret took 38

Edward to France with the aid of a sympathetic French merchant, and there she managed to extract 20,000 crowns from Louis in return for a pledge to surrender Calais, but nothing signifi cant in the way of military assistance. By this time Lancastrian support within England was withering away. This was partly because Edward IV was doing quite a good job as king and partly because there seemed to be little point in maintaining an allegiance to so useless a creature as Henry VI, who was in any case run by his wife. A Scottish invasion did eventually take place in March 1463, which rallied enough enthusiasm among the northern lords to enable them to take Alnwick and Bamburgh, but they could not hold them and the invasion soon petered out once the enthusiasm for border plundering had been satisfi ed.

This appears to have convinced Margaret that nothing more was to be hoped for in the north and in August 1463 she returned to France, again taking Edward with her. Whether her relationship with Henry meant anything at all by this time is not known. They had spent a great deal of time apart over the previous three or four years and had probably had no sexual relationship for a decade. After the fall of Bamburgh at the end of 1463, he had fl ed into Lancashire, where he was betrayed and captured early in 1464. Although when she went to France on this occasion it was with the long-term objective of recovering power, it was with Prince Edward mainly in mind, and she seems to have had no scruples about leaving Henry behind. As it transpired they were never to meet again, although letters were exchanged as long as he was at Bamburgh. Once back in France, Margaret redoubled her diplomatic efforts. She was courteously received by the Duke of Burgundy but gained no assistance and, on 8 October Louis XI came to terms with Edward IV at Hesdin, one of the conditions of which was that he should not help the Lancastrians. She retreated to her father's court at Nancy. The ageing Renée, who was beset by problems of his own, nevertheless accepted a parental responsibility to provide for her. She was assigned the chateau of Koeur in the Duchy of Bar, with 6,000 crowns a year, and remained there until 1468. She still had with her a number of English servants, both male and female, and a hard core of loyal followers, including Sir John Fortescue. The size of her household has been variously estimated at between 50 and 200 and money was always tight.

Nevertheless Edward, by this time 11 years old, was apparently given an education suitable to his status and prospects and seems to have grown into a rather warlike youth. Meanwhile Louis's relations with Edward IV had deteriorated again and the French king began to fi sh in troubled waters. Taking advantage of strains developing in the relationship of the English king with his erstwhile backer, the Earl of Warwick, Louis began to correspond with the latter as early as May 1467.

28

The intention, which was not yet clearly formed, was to detach Warwick and

the King's brother the Duke of Clarence, with whom he was closely allied, from Edward's allegiance, and to use them to restore Henry VI. When the English King signed a new treaty with Philip of Burgundy in 1468, sealed by the marriage of Philip's heir to the King's sister, Louis' intentions hardened. One obstacle in the way of his proposed intention was the implacable hostility of Margaret towards Warwick. It would be diffi cult to restore Henry without her collaboration but so well known were her feelings that she seems not even to have been appraised of the negotiation at this stage. That was probably just as well because when Warwick and Clarence raised a rebellion in England in 1469, surprising and capturing the King, their intentions remained opaque. It appears that Clarence may have been intending to press his own claim and nothing was said about Henry. The latter had been in the Tower since his capture at Waddington Hall and the defeat of the last of his armies at Hexham in 1464 and it may have been doubted whether he any longer had even residual credibility. In any case, his claim was not advanced and the rebellion collapsed in confusion, Edward being somewhat inclined to treat it as a bad joke. Baffl ed, but less defeated than the King believed, Warwick and Clarence retreated to Calais. Having learned from this frustrating experience, the former now made two decisions: fi rst, that he would commit himself to Henry and, second, that he would come to terms with Margaret. Meeting with Louis, he agreed a plan of action, whereby he was to restore Henry with French military assistance and in return would enter into an alliance with Louis against Philip of Burgundy. Prince Edward would accompany him to England and would marry his daughter, Anne. Margaret, however, was not in a co-operative mood. She would at fi rst not hear of the marriage arrangement and was not prepared to allow Edward to go with Warwick. With considerable diffi culty, Louis managed to arrange a meeting between the two, at which a formal reconciliation took place – not without some self-abasement on Warwick's part. Anne and Edward were betrothed and actually married at Amboise in August 1470. It was agreed that the Prince would go to England, but only in his mother's company and after the real work had been done.

On 9 September 1470 the planned invasion took place. Submerged Lancastrian sentiment at once sprang to life and Warwick was able to recruit several noble retinues to his modest army. Meanwhile King

Edward, quite inexcusably unprepared, was in Yorkshire. Warwick advanced on London, which received him, if not with joy, at least without hostility. The hapless Henry VI was taken out of the Tower and paraded at St Paul's as king. What he thought of the proceedings (if anything) is not known. Meanwhile Edward, caught by the treachery of Lord Montague, was left virtually defenceless against the Lancastrian advance. 40

Accompanied by his brother Richard and Lord Hastings, he fl ed to King's Lynn and crossed to Burgundy.

29 It appeared that Warwick's victory was complete and virtually bloodless. He began reshaping the government and addressed himself to the promised French alliance. Attainders were reversed at a parliament that convened on 26 November and new appointments were made. However, relations with the Duke of Clarence became strained as the latter received less than he considered to be his due, and a potentially serious rift began to open in the restored Lancastrian regime. Meanwhile Margaret hesitated, apparently unconvinced by the ease of Warwick's triumph and King Edward, with Burgundian support, planned his return. Philip knew perfectly well that if Henry became fi rmly re-established he would have a war with England on his hands, whereas if Edward were restored they would be friends. He also found his brother-in-law's presence in his territories an embarrassment. Consequently, he sent him on his way as soon as possible, with his blessing and a few troops. On 16 March Edward landed on the Yorkshire coast.

This time confusion and treachery favoured him because many Lancastrian lords were hostile to Warwick, and, although not prepared to fi ght against him, would not declare their allegiance until Margaret arrived to claim it. A game of blind man's buff ensued around Coventry, where news reached both sides that Clarence had abandoned Warwick and declared for his brother. In these circumstances the earl was not prepared to risk battle and Edward was allowed to proceed towards London unresisted. Nothing succeeds like success, and his forces were swelled by fresh retinues as they advanced. He reached the capital on 11 April and recovered the person of his ostensible rival, Henry. At the same time news reached Warwick that Louis had signed a three-month truce with the Burgundians. Just at the moment when he most needed them, neither of his main props were available. The French king had withdrawn and Margaret was still stuck at Harfl eur. Until she arrived, neither the Duke of Somerset, nor the Earl of Devon nor the Earl of Pembroke would join him. Warwick had no option now but to risk battle, even on unfavourable terms, and advanced to Barnet where, on 13 April, he confronted Edward's forces coming from London. The result was an

annihilating defeat and his own death. On the same day, Margaret, whose timely arrival might have saved the day, landed with Edward at Weymouth. Confronted with the news from Barnet, a lesser woman might well have re-embarked and returned to France but Margaret was made of sterner stuff. With the courage for which she had always been famous, she went to Exeter and marched north, recruiting men as she went, and this time the Duke of Somerset and the Earl of Devon were with her. Her intention seems to have been to cross into Wales to join forces with the Earl of Pembroke, but Edward, who was in hot pursuit, caught

up with her forces at Tewkesbury on 4 May. The result was even more lethal than Barnet. Prince Edward, the Earl of Devon and numerous other lords and gentlemen died on the fi eld of battle. Margaret and the Duke of Somerset were captured and the latter was executed on 6 May.

30 Edward re-entered his capital in triumph on 21 May, and that same night, ex-King Henry died in the Tower in mysterious circumstances but probably on Edward's orders.

Totally defeated, and with neither son nor husband left to her, Margaret remained in captivity in London until 1475, her plight only marginally alleviated by the efforts of her former waiting woman, Elizabeth, now Queen. When Edward signed the peace of Pequingy with Louis in the latter year, one of the conditions was that that the French King should take this unwanted dowager off his hands and she was ransomed for 50,000 crowns. Margaret renounced all claims in England and returned to France in January 1476. Her father, by now an old man, appears to have ceded his interests in Provence to Louis to secure her redemption and the King behaved decently towards his cousin. He made her renounce any possible claims that may have lingered from the days when she was theoretically queen of a large part of France and then made her an allowance of 6,000 crowns a year – the same that she had received before Henry's ill-fated readeption. By this time Margaret no longer had even the semblance of a court although a few die-hard Lancastrians still clung to her. Her entourage is alleged to have consisted of three ladies and seven gentlemen. Among these were some of the faithful women who had served her as Queen and when she came to make her will in August 1482, just a few days before her death, one of the witnesses was Margaret Vaux, who had been widowed at Tewkesbury, just a few days before her mistress. Even in her years of misfortune, Margaret still had the capacity to inspire devoted service.

Despite the fact that we know quite a lot about her political activities and over 80 of her letters survive, there are aspects of Margaret's personality that remain impenetrable. Her piety appears to have been conventional and the friendships that she formed mostly opportunist. Sex does not seem to have interested her. It took eight years of

marriage to Henry before she conceived and after his collapse she seems to have lived a life of celibacy. The only scandal that ever touched her was a supposed liaison with the Duke of Suffolk in the 1440s and that was a mere slander aimed at Suffolk. She was quite unlike Catherine de Valois in that respect, being noted for her courage, cleverness and determination rather than for more typically feminine qualities. She was patroness of the Guild of Silkwomen, but did not, as far as we know, show any skill in that direction herself. She fi tted out ships at her own expense to trade into the Mediterranean but that was not a particularly feminine accomplishment either. For a few years 42

she wielded, by the sheer force of personality, real political power in a way she was not supposed to do as a mere consort, and she dominated the husband she was supposed to serve and revere. Edward IV is alleged to have said that 'he feared her more as a fugitive, and in want of the absolute necessities of life, than he did all the princes of the House of Lancaster combined'. As a consequence her historical reputation suffered severely, in England at least, and although George Chatellain's Burgundian chronicle praised her generously, in England she is best known through Shakespeare's plays. The chronicles from which the dramatist took his information were Yorkist and Tudor propaganda, where she appears as a termagent, cruel and cunning. In truth she was neither of these things, but circumstances did make a dominatrix, and as a mother she fought tooth and nail for the rights of her son. With a different husband and in other circumstances she might have been remembered more kindly but, as it is, she appears as an heroic and rather tragic fi gure, quite distinct from the other consorts of the period.

3

The Queen as Lover: Elizabeth Woodville

Edward IV's marriage to Elizabeth Grey (née Woodville) in 1464 created a highly unusual situation. Never before had a ruling king of England married one of his own subjects. The normal practice, both for rulers and potential rulers, had been to take a bride from one of the princely houses of western Europe, as had been the case with Margaret, Catherine, Anne of Bohemia or Philippa of Hainault. Henry Bolingbroke had married Mary Bohun long before there was any prospect of his becoming king and she had died by 1394. Edward the Black Prince had married Joan, daughter of the Earl of Kent, but he had never come to the throne at all. Consequently the normal protocols did not apply to Edward. There were no diplomatic hints, no cautious reactions and no complex negotiations. No dowry was in question and there were no foreign policy implications, except in a purely negative sense. The King of England had taken himself off the marriage market, so no alliance could be strengthened or peace mediated by that means. Neither Henry V nor Henry VI had seen the girls they were committed to until all the formalities had been

completed and the nature of the relationship that followed had to be worked out step by step. Edward married Elizabeth because he wanted her and, if the rumours were true, had sought her as his mistress before he was constrained to marry her. In short their coming together was much more typical of the way in which ordinary young people met and fell in love than it was of a royal marriage – except in one very important respect. An ordinary bride was given away by her kinsfolk in a public ceremony, whereas in this case the marriage was kept so secret that it is not even certain that the bride's father knew what was happening. Edward was a notorious womanizer and the story that Elizabeth defended her honour with a dagger is credible, but if she traded her body for the status of queen they both did pretty well out of the deal. In a marriage that was to last for 19 years, she presented him with no fewer than ten children, which means that she must have been pregnant or convalescent well over half the time, a factor that needs to be borne in mind when the rest of her activities are assessed.

Elizabeth was the elder daughter of Sir Richard Woodville, a gentleman of limited means who had been a household knight and servant to John, Duke of Bedford, the younger brother of King Henry V, who had died in 1435. He 44

was apparently a very handsome young man, and the Duchess, Jacquetta of Luxembourg, held him in high esteem. So high, indeed, that shortly after the Duke's death she married him. Jacquetta was the sister of the Count of St Pol, and came of the highest European nobility, so the marriage was a misalliance similar to that which Catherine de Valois had perpetrated in marrying Owain Tudur. There was, however, nothing morganatic about their union, which was publicly acknowledged, much to the rage of the Count and the rest of her family. She was, however, suffi ciently close to the royal family to have needed the King's licence, and in March 1437 Sir Richard was fi ned the massive sum of £1,000 for having ignored that precaution and for livery of her dower, which was no doubt substantial enough to pay the fi

ne.1 By the time that happened Jacquetta must already have been pregnant with Elizabeth, who was born before the end of that year. The nature of her relationship with the duke is unknown but she had borne him no children and her need is plain. The fact that she proceeded to bear Sir Richard fi ve sons and six daughters tells its own story.

Nothing very much is known about Elizabeth's upbringing but she presumably received the conventional education of a young gentlewoman, strong on piety and the domestic virtues but not conspicuous for 'book learning'. She was literate in English and probably in French, but not in Latin, which she only acquired partially and later. Despite her remarriage, her mother was still

persona grata at court. She was one of the noble ladies sent to escort the young Queen Margaret to England in 1445 and shortly afterwards managed to attach young Elizabeth to the Queen's household as a *demoiselle d'honneur*. This would probably not have happened until she was of a marriageable age and can therefore be tentatively dated to 1449. She seems to have been a very attractive girl and was fi rst sought in marriage by Sir Hugh Johns. Although Johns's suit was promoted by both the Duke of York and the Earl of Warwick, he found no favour. Elizabeth apparently did not fancy him and his backers came out of the wrong political stable to fi nd any favour with Queen Margaret between 1450 and 1453, when this is alleged to have happened.

In fact she was not rushed into marriage at all but, in about 1456, at the relatively mature age of 19, she married John Grey, the son and heir of Edward, Lord Ferrers of Groby. This was a very suitable match for a young lady of her status and connections and argues the management of Sir Richard and his wife, although Elizabeth seems to have been suffi ciently strong minded to veto the suggestion if the proposed groom had not appealed. Both Lord Ferrers and his son were good Lancastrians, and that mattered by 1456. Various manors in Northamptonshire and Essex were settled on the young couple and when Lord Ferrers died, on 18 December 1457, John inherited his title and with it

the splendid estate of Bradgate in Leicestershire, where Elizabeth took up her residence. The new Lord Ferrers, however, was suffi ciently committed to the King to be a fi ghting man, and on 17 February 1461 was severely injured at the second battle of St Albans. He died of his injuries on the 28 February, leaving Elizabeth as a young widow with two small sons. More importantly, she was on the wrong side of the tracks. St Albans had been a Lancastrian victory and Margaret had recovered control of her husband. This had virtually forced the young Earl of March into advancing his own claim and, because he swiftly secured control of London, it was there that he was proclaimed on 4 March. For about three weeks there were two kings in England but Edward's victory at Towton on 29 March proved decisive. The forces of Lancaster were reduced to a remnant, and Henry and Margaret became fugitives. Posthumously, Lord Ferrers became a traitor and his estate was forfeit. The Crown seized Bradgate, and Elizabeth and her family, in much reduced circumstances, were forced to retreat to her dower manor of Grafton. She was 24.

How much Edward may have known about Elizabeth at this point is not clear. He certainly knew Richard and Jacquetta and was on good terms with them in spite of the latter's Lancastrian connections. In the fi rst year of his reign he made them a grant of £100 'by especial royal grace' for no known reason apart from general goodwill, so it is entirely likely that he had fallen for the charms of their young widowed daughter well before he famously encountered her in 1464. At that time he was 22 and one of the most eligible bachelors in Europe. He had also been on the marriage market almost from the day of his birth. In 1445 his father had tried to match him with Princess Madeleine of France (then aged 18 months) and in 1458 he had been dangled under the nose of Philip of Burgundy. Neither of these approaches had been successful but in 1461 the Burgundian proposal had been revived, the target in this case being specifi cally Philip's beautiful niece. That did not work either, but once Edward was on the throne the managerial Earl of Warwick tried to turn his unmarried status to political advantage, proposing fi rst an improbable union with the Queen Mother of Scotland and then another French princess. As recently as February 1464 Henry of Castile had taken the initiative of proposing his own sister. It may have been that the King found these pressures intolerable and resented the presumption of the Earl of

Warwick but, in April 1464, he decided to take his destiny into his own hands. On his way north to deal with the Lancastrians who were later to be defeated at Hexham he stopped at Stony Stratford and on 30 April he slipped away from his entourage and rode over to Grafton Regis, where Richard Woodville was presumably expecting him. Meanwhile Elizabeth was mired in lawsuits as she strove to recover some part of the Grey inheritance. The trouble was that John had been on the wrong side 46

and it was only by a personal appeal to the King that she could hope to obtain redress. Apparently she had done a deal with Lord Hastings to obtain access to Edward but in the event he came to her inst

ead.2 According to romantically inclined chroniclers they met very early in the morning in Whittlebury Forest near Grafton, by chance as it would seem. The reality is likely to have been more prosaic and they probably met at Grafton at a more seasonable hour, perhaps by Richard's mediation but more likely by Jacquetta's. As a result, Thomas Grey, her elder son, was recognized as his father's heir, and Edward married Elizabeth in the presence of some half dozen people, including Jacquetta and the priest. Although the King's action bears all the marks of spontaneity, it is highly unlikely that his decision was as unpremeditated as it was made to appear. He knew enough of Elizabeth to know that he wanted her and she knew enough of his intentions to be prepared for them. Where Edward made his mistake was in keeping quiet about what had happened. He had (it would seem) nothing to be ashamed of – except that he had torn up the rule book insofar as it applied to royal marriages. It was not until September, four months later, when he was being pressed to marry Bona of Savoy, that he confessed what had happened.

Charles Ross described his marriage as 'the fi rst major blunder of his political career' and pointed out that he had no need to marry 'this unsuitable widow' in order to assert his independence from the Earl of Warwick's control. If he had simply wanted to avoid the diplomatic entanglements of a foreign match, there were plenty of ladies available among the higher nobility. That, however, was not the point. He wanted Elizabeth and felt entitled to please himself.

'Now take heed what love may do' wrote the chronicler Gregory, 'for love will not nor may not cast no fault nor peril in no thing.'

3

He knew perfectly well that if he had asked the advice of his council, they would have told him that the idea was unacceptable – so he did not ask them. This was unconventional but not in any sense unlawful. It may also have been in his mind that his realm was full of powerful affi nities and if he had chosen his bride amongst the high aristocracy,

he would inevitably have strengthened her kindred and offended others who felt equally deserving. There was a great deal to be said for looking right outside the system – and offending them all equally. Similar considerations applied to fi nding a bride abroad. If he had chosen within the Burgundian camp he could expect trouble from the French and if he had married a French wife the Duke of Burgundy would have been mortally offended. A Spanish or Italian princess might have resolved that issue but he did not want to look so far afi eld. There was a lot to be said for a queen whose kindred were unpretentious and could be used or not as the King might decide. As well as gratifying him sexually Elizabeth also provided him with a numerous

family, which he could use or not as he chose, without having another powerful affi nity breathing down his neck. Although Edward paid a price for his unusual behaviour there really was quite a lot to be said for Elizabeth. However defensible the King's actions may have been, they attracted nothing but disapprobation at the time. In describing the Council's reaction to the news, Jean de Waurin wrote:

… they answered that she was not his match, however good and however fair she might be, and he must know well that she was no wife for a prince such as himself; for she was not the daughter of a Duke or an Earl, but her mother, the Duchess of Bedford had married a simple knight, so that although she was the child of a duchess and the niece of the Count of St.Pol, still she was no wife for him.

4

Edward must have expected this reaction. The reason for his delay in making the news public was less embarrassment at having acted on impulse than a desire to give her time to acclimatize herself to the idea before being exposed to the role of royal consort. In other circumstances he might have waited a lot longer, but in the summer Louis XI started signalling that he wanted closer contacts with England. He began, not perhaps very wisely, to fl atter the Earl of Warwick, seeing in him the real manager of English policy. It was through negotiations that were so initiated that the marriage offer of Bona of Savoy arose. Bona was not strictly a member of the royal family, being the daughter of the Duke of Savoy, but she was Louis' sister in law, and thus of his extended kindred. The offer was attractive to Warwick, who made positive signals, but he was not authorized to negotiate so important a matter on the King's behalf. The discussions were postponed, fi rst to 8 June and then until the 1 October. During September, therefore, Edward had to declare himself, and either issue instructions for the marriage to be concluded

– or not. The King met his Council about the middle of the month and revealed his true situation. On Michaelmas Day, 29 September, Elizabeth was formally presented to the court as Queen in Reading Abbey

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Politically, the reaction was not as hostile as Edward might have feared. As Waurin makes clear, there was a great deal of ‘tutting’. Both the Queen Mother and the Duke of Gloucester are supposed to have been offended but as the Duke was barely 12 years old at the time his opinion need not be taken too seriously. Both the Earl of Warwick and the Duke of Clarence took part in the Queen’s

‘coming out’ and although Warwick is later supposed to have been seriously antagonized he did not show much sign of it at the time. The person who had the best reason to be upset was Louis XI, but he seems to have shrugged the whole affair off as diplomatic hitch and continued to pursue the idea of an alliance. It was 10 October before he fi nally learned that his conference was not going 48

to resume but he was not unduly discouraged and kept up his contacts with Warwick. It is possible that both the King of France and the Earl began to look askance at the King of England at this time but their overt hostility came much later and in other political circumstances. Elizabeth was crowned with due pomp at Westminster on 26 May 1465, when Edward made the most conscientious efforts to elevate her in the public estimation. Not only were large sums spent on cloth of gold, and upon scarlet and gold uniforms for the heralds, but more than 40 new knights of the Bath were created (more than at Edward's own coronation) and the occasion was graced with the attendance of the Queen's uncle, Jacques de Luxembourg. Jacques played a prominent part in the coronation tournament but the real purpose of his presence was to emphasize Elizabeth's European status, via her mother.

6 She must have been in the early stages of pregnancy at the time of her crowning because the eldest child of her second marriage was born on 26 February 1466. The young Elizabeth's baptism was used as an occasion for a display of 'togetherness', perhaps aimed at a sceptical public. Her godmothers were her two grandmothers, Cecily Duchess of York and Jacquetta of Luxembourg, who were popularly supposed not to be on speaking terms, while the godfather was none other than the Earl of Warwick. The fact that she was a daughter may have caused a certain amount of headwagging because both of Elizabeth's children by her fi rst marriage had been sons but the opportunity for a little family solidarity was not lost. However, two years into her marriage to the King, she had not yet presented him with an heir.

It has sometimes been suggested that Edward immediately set out to build up his wife's large family into a political faction, capable of balancing the Nevilles, or his own brothers, but there is little sign of that. What he did was to establish an aristocratic context for Elizabeth by securing marriages for her numerous unprovided sisters. Over the next few years Margaret was wedded to Thomas, Lord Maltravers, the heir to the Earl of Arundel; Anne to William, Viscount Bourchier, heir to the Earl of Essex, Jacquetta to John, Lord Strange of Knockin; Catherine to Henry Stafford, grandson and heir to the Duke of Buckingham; Mary to William Herbert (Lord Dunster), heir to Lord

Herbert and Eleanor to Anthony, Lord Grey of Ruthin, heir to the Earl of Kent. Not all these unions were obtained without a certain amount of arm twisting and it was alleged that the Woodville girls had exhausted the pool of eligible young noblemen. However the kinship established through their wives did not in any sense pull these men together into a coherent party and apart from causing a certain amount of resentment among other noblemen with daughters to dispose of – notably the Earl of Warwick – its impact upon the political scene was negligible. No doubt it was more noticeable at court, but none of these ladies appear to have been

the dominant parties in their several relationships. The Queen's involvement in brokering these deals varied but it was undoubtedly she who brought about the union between her 20-year-old brother, John, and the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk, who was about 65. Katherine de Mowbray (nee Neville) was extremely wealthy and had already survived three husbands. She was also the aunt of the Earl of Warwick and it may well have been this shameless piece of exploitation, which took place in January 1565, which turned Warwick against the Queen, rather than her marriage to Edwar

d.7 Elizabeth also seems to have been entirely responsible for a deal in October 1466 whereby she paid the King's sister Anne, Duchess of Exeter, 4000 marks to marry her daughter and heir (also Anne) to her own elder son, Thomas Grey. At the time Anne was already betrothed to Warwick's nephew, George Neville, the son and heir to the Earl of Northumberland.8 The Earl of Warwick was not directly involved, but again the rather heavy-handed tactics that were employed argues a distinct lack of sensibility to Neville's interests – and honour – on the part of the Queen. At the same time, when the Earl sought to marry his eldest daughter to the Duke of Clarence, the King refused to give his consent – and so the tally of niggling grievances built up.

Apart from these matrimonial manipulations, Edward neither directly nor indirectly did much to favour the Woodville clan. Most obviously the Queen's father, Richard, was appointed to the lucrative offi ce of Treasurer of England in March 1466 and created Earl Rivers in May. In August 1567 he succeeded the Earl of Worcester as Constable of England, and these offi ces together are calculated to have brought him an income of about £1,300 a year.

9 However he received no lands, and the increase in his wealth did not compare with the increments awarded to the Nevilles, or to Lord Hastings in the fi rst year or two of the reign. Perhaps the King judged that the massive dower lands of the Duchess Jacquetta were more than suffi cient to uphold the status of the King's father-in-law. Anthony, Richard's eldest son, was already married to Elizabeth, the heiress of Thomas Lord Scales and became Lord Scales in right of his wife when Thomas died. In November 1466 he was given the Lordship of the Isle of Wight and the Keepership of Carisbrooke castle but this

was no more than a modest token of confi dence. Anthony's younger brothers, Sir Edward and Sir Richard Woodville, seem to have gained nothing from their sister's elevation. The youngest member of the family, Lionel, was a priest who became dean of Exeter in 1478 at the age of 25 and Bishop of Salisbury four years later, both of which appointments he owed to the King's patronage. 10 Consequently, it cannot be fairly claimed that Edward either drained the resources of the Crown to provide for his wife's kindred, nor that he sought to create a party out of them to balance the Nevilles. In fact in 1465–6 he was still making far greater grants to the latter than ever came the

way of the Woodvilles. No one had been starved of royal patronage to feed the Queen's relations.

Nor were the Queen's own revenues granted with a lavish or ill considered hand. After careful consultation with the Council, dower land to the value of

£4,541 was settled on her, drawn mainly from the Duchy of Lancaster.

11 This was signifi cantly less than the 10,000 marks (£6,600) that had been awarded to her predecessor, but it was secure revenue, and was several times adjusted upwards. With careful management Elizabeth was able to maintain her household on a lavish scale, and to dispense her own patronage generously. The main benefi ciaries were her servants, to whom she remained conspicuously loyal, and the remoter members of her family – cousins usually – who did not come within the range of direct royal bounty. Apart from securing his marriage, and his rights of inheritance, there was not much at this time that she could do for Thomas, her elder son, who was only about 10 years old, and Richard, the younger, does not feature at all. Yet despite all this evidence of restraint and good management, Elizabeth undoubtedly remained very unpopular, and the question remains as to why this should have been so. Her direct political infl uence was very slight. She stood for no programme and had no agenda and yet the evidence of dislike is contemporary and does not depend upon later Yorkist and Tudor mythology. This was partly due to sheer snobbishness against her parvenue status. Despite all that Edward could do, and despite the fact that Richard had been created a baron by Henry VI in 1448, Elizabeth was seen and represented as the daughter of a

'mere knight'. It was also partly due to her own personality. In spite of her obvious sex appeal, she seems to have been a chilly and unamiable creature, very much wrapped up in her own affairs. Her patronage was always calculated to enhance her own position and the unattractive side of her good household management was a tight-fi sted acquisitiveness. She was a generous patron of Queens' College, Cambridge and is seen as its co-founder, but that seems to have been occasioned less by an enthusiasm for education than from a desire to blot out the memory of her predecessor. With the possible exception

of Lord Scales, the rest of her family showed similar characteristics, as the persecution of Sir Thomas Cook by Lord Rivers and his wife in 1468 appears to demonstrate. Cook, a former Lord Mayor of London, seems to have had Lancastrian sympathies, although in what ways these had been manifested is not clear. He was accused of treason at the instance of Lord Rivers and imprisoned. While he was in prison his house was ransacked by servants of Rivers and various property was stolen, apparently for the benefi t of Lady Rivers. When he was brought to trial, Cook was acquitted, but found guilty of the lesser crime of misprision and fi ned £5,000. In response to his complaint, an independent commission was then appointed to assess the damage

infl icted by Rivers and set it against his fi ne, but before this reported the Queen demanded the ancient (but largely forgotten) right of ‘Queen’s gold’ to the tune of another £600, which he was compelled to pay. Not surprisingly, Cook became an even more enthusiastic Lancastrian and petitioned the readeption parliament in 1470 for losses of £14,666. The source of this story is Robert Fabyan’s

Chronicle, so it cannot be accepted entirely at face value. 12 However, Fabyan claims to have been Cook’s apprentice at the time and as told it is full of circumstantial detail. The villain was clearly Rivers, but neither Edward nor Elizabeth emerge with any credit. It may not be irrelevant that the rebels executed the Earl in 1469 but there is no trace of the ill feeling that might have been expected to result between London and the King. What is most signifi cant is that a story against the Queen’s family, although almost certainly distorted and exaggerated, should have been relayed and accepted in such an authoritative way. It is probably fair to conclude that, although the King took no steps to convert the Woodville family into an aristocratic affi nity, they nevertheless saw themselves in that light. There is some supporting evidence for that in the marriage agreements concluded on behalf of the Queen’s sisters, which show Rivers trading favours on terms of equality with the great houses into which the young ladies were marrying. They may not have been particularly powerful in fact, but their pretensions grated and they did not carry their good fortune graciously.

When Edward was suddenly overwhelmed by rebellion in the summer of 1469, Elizabeth was safely ensconced in the Tower. The Earl of Warwick’s objective seems to have been to recover control over the King, as though he had been no more

compos mentis than Henry VI, but all he managed to achieve was the resolution of his private vendetta against the Woodvilles and their allies. On 25

July he had the better of a confused and sanguinary battle near Banbury, captured the King and executed (without any semblance of judicial process) the Earl of Devon, Earl Rivers, Sir John Woodville and Sir Thomas Herber

t.13 Warwick's more general political objectives are obscure. He endeavoured to call a parliament to York and may have been intending to depose Edward in favour of his brother the Duke of Clarence but he was not really in command of the situation and when Edward escaped from Middleham Castle in September, it seems that he decided to settle for a bargain. He had demonstrated that although he could obtain a temporary ascendancy, he could not obtain suffi cient support to remove Edward

– least of all in favour of Clarence. Moreover he had no appealing agenda. There were grievances out there to be exploited but he made no attempt to do so. His aims, as one scholar has observed, remained entirely and obviously selfi sh. On the other hand his lawless behaviour had earned him no punishment, because the King was bent on reconciliation.

[Edward] ‘regarded nothing more than to win again the friendship of such noblemen as were now alienated from him, to confi rm the goodwill of them that were hovering and inconstant, and to reduce the mind of the multitude … unto their late obedience, affection and goodwill towards him.

’14

So Warwick ended up more or less where he had started, a great nobleman and infl uential about the King but by no means enjoying the power that he coveted. The king was also now warned that he could not trust his erstwhile ally and the Queen, who had never had much affection for the Nevilles, was now bitterly alienated by the deaths of her father and uncle. Elizabeth does not appear very much in the discussions of these events but she was a good hater and she was spending time in her husband’s company in February 1470 because that was when their next child was conceived.

Warwick undoubtedly realized that he had earned the bitter hostility of the Queen and may for that reason not entirely have trusted Edward’s conciliatory pose. From his point of view he had merely scotched the Woodville snake and might in the process have made it even more dangerous. For whatever reason, when rebellion broke out in Lincolnshire, in March 1470, he decided to abandon his temporary reconciliation, and try again. Some of his and Clarence’s retinues were already with the rebels when they were defeated near Stamford on 12 March. Warwick, however, had miscalculated badly. The rebellion was suppressed and no other major nobleman joined them in supporting it, so they had exposed themselves for nothing. On 24 March Edward issued a proclamation against them and they fl ed by devious routes to Calais. Refused entry there, but backed by a formidable fl eet, Warwick and Clarence replenished their coffers with a little piracy and then, running out of other options, decided to seek the assis tance of the King of France. Although it may have been forced upon them, this was a critical decision, because Louis was seeking a complete regime change in England in order to install a government sympathetic to himself and hostile to the Duke of Burgundy. This could only be accomplished if Clarence abandoned his claim, and the pair worked together for a restoration of Henry VI, then a prisoner in the Tower. As we have seen, a diffi cult negotiation with Margaret of

Anjou successfully accomplished this change of allegiance and Warwick sailed from La Hogue with French and Lancastrian backing on 9 September, landing in Devon a couple of days later.

15 In the light of their two previous experiences, the result this time was truly astonishing. Three weeks later, on 2 October, after a series of misfortunes and miscalculations, Edward fl ed from King's Lynn to the Low Countries. During the summer of 1470, as Edward was away in the north and her pregnancy steadily developed, Elizabeth remained ensconced in the royal apartments

at the Tower, but when news of his precipitate fl ight reached her, she hastily transferred herself and her three young daughters to the safety of the sanctuary at Westminster. Although this misfortune might eventually cut off all her resources, for the time being she was well provided for, being accompanied by a large number of servants and several wagon loads of household goods. There, on 1 November, she gave birth to a son, who was promptly named Edward for his absent father. She was now the proud mother of an heir to the throne – if he eventually had any throne to inherit. The exiled king was speedily appraised of this happy event and indeed the exchange of letters between the royal couple seems not to have been greatly impeded by the circumstances of their separation. For the fi rst time in her life, Elizabeth found herself popular. What has been called the 'feminine helplessness' of a newly delivered mother may have contributed to this but it was also the case that the restored government of Henry VI neither pleased nor impressed the Londoners, and expressing sympathy for Elizabeth was a low key way of dissenting. After her ordeal was over, several of her more prominent helpers were suitably rewarded. One Margaret Cobb (who may have been her midwife) was granted an annuity of £12; Dr Sergio, her physician received £40; a butcher named Gould who had kept her modest household supplied with meat, was allowed to lade a royal ship with tallow free of charge; and Abbot Thomas Milling, who had welcomed and protected her, was made Bishop of Hereford.

While his queen languished helplessly in sanctuary, Edward busied himself about the recovery of his kingdom. Duke Charles of Burgundy had been less than delighted to fi nd his brother-in-law as a fugitive in his domain, and it was left to Louis of Bruges, within whose immediate jurisdiction the King had landed, to extend the hand of welcome. Although Charles was at war with France, and had every reason to fear the disposition of the new government in England, his fi rst reaction was to conciliate Warwick rather than to help Edward. However, either by the persuasions of his wife, or by the logic of circumstance, his mind was changed. On 26 December 1470 he welcomed Edward to his court, and over the next few days a deal was done between them. Although he would not publicly make any statement in his support, nevertheless he would give him 50,000

fl orins (£20,000) and fi t out three or four ships for him. Edward deployed his money to good effect, and on 11 March was able to leave Flushing with 36 ships and about 1,200 men, including several gunners.

16 He had also re-established contact with his brother and was reasonably confi dent that Clarence would support him once he had shown his hand. Meanwhile Warwick was expecting him, but having considerable diffi culty in making defensive preparations. For a variety of reasons, his support was very limited and as he tried to mobilize 54

against Edward that became abundantly clear. On 14 March the returning exile landed at Ravenspur on the Humber, in what should theoretically have been hostile territory. However the Earl of Northumberland, who was strong in the region, held his hand, and Edward was able to bluff his way into York. As other equivocators like Lord Montague continued to hold back, Edward moved south, and his support continued to grow. Most critically he was joined at Leicester by 3,000 men under Lord Hastings. On 2 April Clarence fi nally declared himself and, bypassing Warwick, who was then at Coventry, the King headed for London The capital was divided, but Edward's supporters proved the stronger, and the Common Council resolved that 'as Edward late King of England was hastening towards the city with a powerful army, and as the inhabitants were not suffi ciently versed in the use of arms to withstand so large a force, no attempt should be made to resist him …'

Despite the equivocal use of 'late' in describing the King, this declaration was suffi cient, and on 11 April 1471 Edward entered the city, securing in the process the person of his rival and several of the latter's more prominent supporters. He was also reunited with the wife, whom he had not seen for over a year, and introduced to his 6-month-old son. Elizabeth promptly moved out of the sanctuary, which had been her home for about eight months, and returned to the Tower. Although his supporters were now fl ocking to him, and his grip on London was secure, the Earl of Warwick remained unfought, and Margaret of Anjou still lurked in the wings. There was much to do. On 13 March Edward moved out of the city towards St Albans aware that Warwick was advancing. The following day, which was Easter Sunday, the two armies met at Barnet, and the Lancastrians were routed, both the Earl of Warwick and Lord Montague being killed on the fi

eld.17

It was as decisive a victory as could well have been wished for and Edward had the bodies of his enemies displayed in St.Pauls. Two days later the news reached him that Margaret had landed at Weymouth and that the old Lancastrians were rallying to her. Instead of being able to enjoy his victory, he had now to pick up this fresh challenge. As Margaret and her son moved north from Exeter to Bristol,

apparently well supported, and headed for the Severn to cross into Wales, Edward set off in hot pursuit, and after a number of false sightings fi nally caught up with her at Tewkesbury on 4 May. There he won an equally decisive victory, capturing Margaret and killing the Prince of Wales on the fi eld.

It must have appeared at fi rst that his victory was now total and secure but while he was occupied at Tewkesbury, fresh Lancastrian risings took place both in the north and in Kent. Thomas Neville, an illegitimate son of the Earl of Kent, known as the Bastard Faulconberg, had raised the county and was attacking London. The Queen, it was reported, was besieged in the Tower of London. In fact

it did not quite come to that. Although the Bastard was supported by a number of armed ships, the Londoners feared a sack and resisted resolutely, until on 14

May Earl Rivers who was in command of the Tower, led a sortie which drove the attackers back. Reports that Edward himself was on his way with his victorious army fi nally demoralised the Kentishmen and they fl ed, the bastard himself escaping to Calais. On the same day, as he awaited reinforcements at Coventry, the news reached Edward that the northern rebellion had petered out. Partly because they had learned of the disaster at Tewkesbury and partly because the Earl of Northumberland remained loyal, it now appeared to the local leaders that they had neither a cause nor a captain and they laid down their arms and began to sue for par

don.18 After this, there was only some tidying up to be done, like securing the submission of Calais, which was achieved during July. As Henry VI had died on the night of Edward's return to London from Coventry, his son had died at Tewkesbury, and Margaret was safely imprisoned, the Lancastrian challenge remained only in the obscure and fugitive fi gure of Henry of Richmond. For the next 12 years, England enjoyed an interval of peace.

In 1472 Louis of Bruges visited England at the King's invitation and was created Earl of Wiltshire as a gesture of gratitude for his help and support. In the journal of his visit, which was kept by a secretary, we get a number of glimpses of life at the English court. Elizabeth, as might be expected, features regularly in his account, but never doing anything of political signifi cance. She attends lavish banquets, introduces the visitors to her children and is on one occasion surprised playing at marbles and ninepins with her ladies. Her second son, Richard, was born in August 1473, and she is noted to have offered with the King at the shrine of St. Edward at Westminster. Her mother, Jacquetta, died in 1472, causing her considerable distress, and she accompanied Edward on his visits to Oxford. There was, however, rather more to Elizabeth than this domestic routine might indicate. Her revenues were further, although not dramatically, augmented, and it was noted in 1475 that her infl uence in East Anglia was so great that she was

‘regarded as one of the main instruments of roy

al policy’19 in that area. In that year also, while the King was pursuing his brief and abortive war with France, which was ended at Picquingy on 29 August, Elizabeth was named as Governor of the Realm in his absence. She was probably a compromise candidate for this particular job, because Edward was not anxious to exalt any of his already powerful nobles to such a position. Nevertheless her appointment indicates a level of political involvement that would not be expected from the record of her activities. There was much resentment among the English military at the tame outcome of this confrontation but neither Elizabeth nor the King himself had to cope with any signifi cant disturbances.

Meanwhile, the Queen went on bearing children. By the time that Edward returned from the wilderness she had produced three daughters and one son, all of them alive and well. In 1472 she bore another daughter, Margaret, who lived only a short while, and in 1473 (as we have seen) a second son, Richard. There then followed Anne (1475), George (1477), Catherine (1479) and Bridget (1480), of whom only George died young. It could be argued that Edward had found the ideal way to keep his wife out of political mischief and her fecundity made up for at least some of the qualities in which she may have been lacking. Meanwhile her frequent pregnancies gave her husband the opportunity to play the fi eld, which he did apparently with enthusiasm and success. We do not know how many bastards Edward sired because he did not usually acknowledge them and only two appear in the records – Arthur, subsequently Viscount Lisle, and Grace, who was placed in Elizabeth's household, and was to be with her when she died. Grace may have been an unusually amiable child, or she may have been intended as a reminder to Elizabeth not to presume upon her connubial attractions. If Elizabeth ever resented these wanderings she was wise enough to say nothing and she certainly could not complain that her husband was neglecting her for other women.

The one political incident in which she is alleged to have been involved in these years was the second and fatal fall from grace of the King's brother the Duke of Clarence. Clarence was a surly, abrasive person, and although his return to allegiance in 1471 had been of great importance, Edward never really trusted him. His wife, Isobel, died on 22 December 1476, and there was soon talk of his re-marriage to his niece, Mary of Burgundy. Duke Charles was killed at Nancy in January 1477 and his widow Margaret was Clarence's sister. Margaret was desperate to preserve the integrity of the Burgundian inheritance, now in the hands of a mere girl, and saw a marriage within her own family as a means to enlist English support. Edward would not entertain the suggestion, for the good reason that if his brother ever disposed of the great power of Burgundy, he might well be tempted to try his luck again at home. For rather similar, if less potent reasons, he would also not countenance a union between Clarence and Margaret, the sister of the King of Scots, which was also suggested. The Duke sulked, publicly and offensively. He also, apparently, became

tangentially involved in necromancy when some members of his household joined with a group that was trying to use the black arts to discover when Edward would die. This was the treasonable offence of ‘compassing and imagining’ the King’s death. The group were convicted by a special commission on 19 May 1477, and two of them were put to death.

20 If, as seems likely, this was intended as a warning to Clarence, he paid no heed. Even before the verdict was delivered he

had accused one of Duchess Isobel's former servants of having poisoned her. He had the unfortunate Ankarette Twynho seized and taken to Warwick by force, where she was convicted by an intimidated jury and hanged on 13 April.

21 The Duke had simply taken the law into his own hands in manifest contempt of his brother's authority and for that reason was arrested towards the end of June and committed to the Tower.

Elizabeth had no particular reason to sympathize with Ankarette Twynho but she did have good reason to fear and dislike Clarence. Not only did she not forget his pretensions in 1470, which had been made more threatening by the birth of his son in 1475, she also blamed him for the deaths of her father and uncle. Warwick, who shared that responsibility, was out of reach, but the Duke was now suddenly vulnerable to revenge. There is no direct evidence and the story may simply be a part of that 'black legend' that subsequently gathered around the Queen and her kindred but it is quite likely that Elizabeth urged her husband to deal with his troublesome brother once and for all. Something must account for his unprecedented behaviour because he appeared in person in the House of Lords in January 1478, and accused Clarence of Treason. Evidence of criminal misconduct was plentiful and genuine but that of treason was not. However, the King's word could not be gainsaid in his own Court and the Duke was duly convicted. There then followed a delay of ten days. This was common and was often allowed to the condemned to give them time to make their peace with God but, in this case, because of the peculiar circumstances, it was thought that Edward was struggling with his conscience – and that may well have been the case. The eventual outcome was as unprecedented as the trial because Clarence was neither pardoned nor publicly executed, but privately murdered – allegedly by being drowned in a butt of malmsey wine.

22 This detail is probably a picturesque fabrication, but of the private nature of his execution there can be no doubt. Later historians blamed both the Queen and the Duke of Gloucester for this bizarre outcome and, whereas Richard can certainly be exonerated, similar certainty cannot be deployed in support of Elizabeth. Even her worst enemies did not claim that she was directly responsible and the King himself

must take the blame but in the private and unrecorded world of pillow talk the suspicion remains. Elizabeth's piety appears to have been entirely conventional. She offered dutifully at various shrines and made pious donations of a modest nature. She is alleged to have had a particular devotion to the Virgin Mary as mediatrix but the evidence for any such enthusiasm is slight. She was chief Lady of the Garter but that refl ected her status as queen rather than any particular devotion to chivalry. The only exception to this relative anonymity was her generosity to Queens'

College in Cambridge but she never showed very much interest in the work of the 58

college and was not a particular patron of scholars. Edward took a lively interest in the work of the new printing press established by William Caxton in 1576 but his main expenditure was not on books but on buildings. He virtually refounded the Order of the Garter and built the sumptuous chapel at Windsor as a setting for its ceremonial – but it was on the refurbishment of his own residences that he spent most of his money and time. His patronage of religion has been described as 'rather sparse' but did embrace the Carthusian monastery at Sheen, founded by Henry V, of which both Edward and his queen were generous supporters. In 1480 he was visited by his sister, the Dowager Duchess of Burgundy and, on her prompting, introduced the rigorous order of reformed, or Observant, Franciscans. Although he was also well known for the lavish equipment of his chapels this was probably his most signifi cant contribution to the religious life of his kingdom. In literature both their tastes seem to have run to chronicles and French romances. Of humanist scholarship in the sense that that was understood in Italy, his Court appears to have been entirely innocent.

During the last six or seven years of his life, Edward's main diplomatic concern was the advantageous marriage of his own children and, although Elizabeth's hand in these negotiations must be assumed, it is often hard to trace. Her eldest son by her fi rst marriage had already been provided for. As we have seen, he had been betrothed at fi rst to Anne, daughter of the Duke of Exeter and, when Anne died young, married to Cecily the daughter and heir of Lord Bonville. He had been created Earl of Huntingdon in 1471, and Marquis of Dorset in 1475. By 1480

at the age of 25, he could consider himself well established in life. The diplomatic activity of 1475–81 was about Edward's own children. In 1476 the 6-year-old Edward was proposed as a match for the Infanta Isabella of Castile, then for a daughter of the Emperor Frederick III, and then for a daughter of the former Duke of Milan, but in every case '… the chief diffi culty which they speak of will be owing to the great quantity of money which the king of England will want'

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by way of dowry. In other words Edward was being greedy, and

overpricing his son. More realistically, in 1481, an agreement was almost concluded with Duke Francis II of Brittany for a marriage with his daughter and heir Anne but this was abandoned at the last minute possibly because of the King's fears of the inevitable reaction from the King of France if the heir to one of his major fi efs were to wed the future King of England. Meanwhile Elizabeth (who was not, of course, the heir) had been betrothed to the Dauphin, and Cecily to the future James IV of Scotland, at the time boy of about 5. Of the older girls, only Mary was uncommitted and she may have been in poor health because she was to die in 1482 at the age of 15. Anne, Catherine and Bridget were too young and too far down the pecking order to have been considered in this context. Richard,

although almost equally young, was conscripted because John Mowbray the fourth Duke of Norfolk had died in January 1476 leaving an infant daughter as his only heir. With an eye on securing the great Mowbray inheritance, Edward immediately hallmarked her for the young Duke of York and they were actually married at Westminster in Januar

y 1478.24 In the event, she died in November 1481, long before the pair could have co-habited, but the King's objective had been secured because her inheritance lay vested in Duke Richard for the duration of his life, a situation confi rmed by statute in January 1483.This was the sole extent of the King's success with all these negotiations, however, and when he died in April 1483 none of his surviving seven children was actually married. The whole job had, it appeared, been left for Elizabeth to do all over again. The King's unexpected death left the Queen in no-mans land. Edward was a few days short of his 42nd birthday and had been ill for about a month. The cause of his death appears to have been overindulgence in wine, food and sex. In Shakespeare's words he had 'overmuch consumed his royal person' and either his liver, or his heart, or both, collapsed under the strain. Contemporary accounts show him as suitably penitent for his lifestyle when it was too late for amendment and concerned to reconcile the feuds that raged among the courtiers around him, particularly that between Lord Hastings and the Marquis of Dorset.25 The story that he was exercised by a rivalry between Elizabeth and the Duke of Gloucester appears to be a later interpolation. The issue that he did not satisfactorily resolve, however, was who should hold the regency for his 12-year-old heir or what kind of offi ce that should be. The last guidance in writing was a will drawn up at the time of his going to France in 1475. As we have seen, he had then left Elizabeth as Governor in his absence, so it was natural that she should have been named as Regent in the event of his demise. Apart from her family her power base at that time consisted of a *de facto* control over the council of the Prince of Wales, a position to which young Edward had been elevated within a year of his birth. For about three months the Queen appears to have presided at Council meetings, although her input into the discussions is not known. The King may have been dissatisfi ed with the results of this experiment because in the last week or so of his life he named his surviving brother, Richard of Gloucester, as

Regent. There was no time to commit this formally to writing, but it was well enough known, and the Queen did not challenge it. Just as Edward appears to have transferred his sexual attentions to a new mistress – Jane Shore – in the last year of his life, so at the end he transferred his political trust to his brother. Elizabeth was left with her dower lands but with no political role.

However, the situation was not as straightforward as it appeared. Because Edward had not defi ned the regency that he conferred on his brother, it was 60

open to interpretation. Although the realm was in ‘quiet and prosperous estate’

thanks to the late king’s energetic and continuous judicial perambulations that was a fragile and personal achievement. Those who favoured Richard pointed to his proven track record and argued for a full Protectorate, which would include custody of the King’s person, and would last until he achieved his majority at 18. Those most favourable to the Queen, on the other hand, tried to claim that the Protectorship should last only until the King was crowned – effectively a few weeks – after which the Queen Mother could be as much in control as she might chose. Alternatively, the Protectorate could be interpreted, not as the kind of full power that Humphrey of Gloucester had enjoyed, but as little more than a nominal presidency of the Council. Meanwhile Richard was still in the north, where he dutifully proclaimed Edward V at York as soon as news of the King’s death reached him and wrote a suitable letter of condolence to the Queen. For all his apparent confi dence and ruthlessness, however, Richard appears to have been of a nervous and suspicious disposition, and he undoubtedly knew of the efforts which Elizabeth and her friends were making in council to undermine his position. He had, apparently, no fi xed hostility to the Woodville/Grey connection, but he was suspicious of their intentions, and particularly suspicious of the close relationship that existed between the young Prince of Wales and his maternal uncle, Earl Rivers. He was well aware that he hardly knew the boy himself, and might fi nd it diffi cult to win his confi dence. His suspicions were probably increased by the fact that the Marquis of Dorset was Constable of the Tower, Sir Edward Woodville commanded the fl eet, and that a sizeable force had been assemble in the south-east in anticipation of another spat with France. In other words he feared a coup against himself, and seems to have been persuaded that not only his position but his life was in danger.

Meanwhile, plans were being made to bring the young king from Ludlow, where he had been discharging his princely functions, to London. He would be conducted by Earl Rivers, and Elizabeth, who seems to have had suspicions of her own, argued in council for a large force to escort him. The Council, however, was unwilling to entrust so substantial an army to Earl Rivers, and arguing that there was no need

for such precautions, imposed a ceiling of 2,000 on the escort. Ironically Lord Hastings appears to he been the proposer of this limitation. Richard, who was simultaneously moving towards London with a much larger force, seized his opportunity, and intercepted the royal escort at Stony Stratford on the 30 April. Rivers and his nephew Richard Grey were arrested and the royal escort dismissed.

26 The Duke of Gloucester's intentions at this point are quite unclear because he proceeded towards London with his young charge as though nothing had happened and was welcomed by the Council as Protector.

61

Plans for Edward's coronation proceeded, and it seemed at fi rst that Richard was simply claiming the full Protectorate as that had been proposed by his friends. The Queen, however, with what turned out to be a fully justifi ed premonition of disaster, took refuge again in the Westminster sanctuary with her daughters and her younger son. If there had ever been a Woodville/Grey party bidding for power, it collapsed within a few days. The Marquis of Dorset joined his mother in the sanctuary and Sir Edward Woodville fl ed to Brittany. Richard of Gloucester reached London on 4 May, and the Council immediately confi rmed his full powers. He immediately began to remodel the administration and conferred wide ranging powers upon his ally the Duke of Buckingham. However, he also fi xed Edward's coronation for 22 June and called a parliament to meet on 25 June.

27

At some point between the end of May and 12 June, Richard decided to seize the Crown. On the latter day he had Lord Hastings arrested at a Council meeting and summarily executed on the grounds that he had been intriguing with the Queen. This he justifi ed on the grounds that '… the queen, her blood adherents and affi nity … have daily intended and doth intend to murder and destroy Us and our cousin the Duke of Buckingham.' This excuse reeks of paranoia, and seems not to have had the slightest justifi cation. However, it did not in itself secure the Crown. That was achieved, partly by mustering large forces loyal to him from the north of England and partly by resurrecting a hoary old scandal that Edward's marriage to Elizabeth had been invalidated by a precontract.

28 Before he took this step, he had taken the precaution of extracting the young Richard of York from the sanctuary with smooth professions of loyalty and good faith, not unrelated to a discreet show of force. A charade of petition and acceptance having then been played out for the benefi t of the citizens of London, Richard was proclaimed king as Richard III on 26 June and crowned with great pomp on 6 July. Anthony, Earl Rivers and Sir Richard Grey were summarily executed at Pontefract. Edward and his brother remained for some time in the Tower and then notoriously disappeared. By the autumn they were almost certainly dead. 29 Elizabeth had now become a political

irrelevance. The parliament which convened in January 1484 obediently decreed that she had never been married to the late King Edward, and that all her children were consequently illegitimate. She was deprived of her dower lands and should theoretically have been reduced to penury. Having now no realistic option, and fi nding the Westminster sanctuary continually surrounded by the King's soldiers, in March 1484, Elizabeth came to terms. In spite of the carnage that he had wrought among her kindred, the kind of militant last-ditch option that might have appealed to Margaret of Anjou was not for her. She had every reason to suppose that her sons were dead, so there was

no longer a political battle to be fought, moreover she had the interests of fi ve daughters to protect as best she could. In return for surrendering all her claims Richard agreed to make a modest provision for her and to give her somewhere to live. On that understanding, she and her children quitted the sanctuary and the agreement was honoured on both sides. In the previous autumn Elizabeth had agreed to the betrothal of her eldest daughter to the Lancastrian pretender Henry of Richmond, but she now withdrew from that position and the younger Elizabeth, now 17, instead was welcomed at King Richard's court. After the death of his wife Anne Neville in March 1485, there were rumours that he intended to marry her but they appear to have been unsubstantiated and Elizabeth was no party to them.

The events of August 1485 did not immediately rescue her from poverty and obscurity, but when the new king, Henry VII, decided to honour his threeyear-old pledge to marry her eldest daughter, her fortunes were revived. Having withdrawn her consent for this union as part of her understanding with Richard she was now constrained to renew it and the wedding duly took place in January 1486. Elizabeth was now again a member of the royal family. Her dower lands were restored on 5 March 1486 and when Arthur was born in September, she stood as godmother. In July, when a three-year truce was signed with the Scots, a multiple marriage package was discussed which would have matched the Queen Dowager (then about 50) with the 34-year-old (and widowed) King of Scots and two of her daughters with two of his sons, but nothing came of the negotiation. Henry may not have been very fond of his mother-in-law – hence his willingness to despatch her to Scotland – but the idea that he suspected her of involvement in the Lambert Simnel fi asco is a pure fabrication. Had Elizabeth really been convinced that Simnel was her missing son, she might have been sorely tempted but she had good reason to believe that he had died four years earlier, and there is no contemporary evidence to support the charge. What did happen, however, was that her endowment was transferred in February 1487 to her daughter and that then, or shortly after, she retired to Bermondsey Abbey. This arrangement seems to have been voluntary rather than punitive and when Henry made her a gift of 200 marks in March 1488, he described her as the 'right dear and right well beloved Queen

Elizabeth, late wife unto the noble prince of famous memory King Edward IV, and mother unto our dearest w

ife the Queen …’30

The king gave her an annuity of £400 in 1490, and several other presents over the next few years, as well as arranging honourable marriages for three of her four remaining daughters.

31 The fourth and youngest, Bridget, took the veil. By the terms of his own hereditary claim to the throne (such as it was) Henry should have described Edward IV as a usurper, but he never did so, reserving that epithet

for Richard III. This was straightforward pragmatism because if Edward had been a lawful king, and properly married to Elizabeth, then Edward V had also been a lawful king and his own wife was legitimate. This placed all the odium on Richard and made Henry the reconciler of the feud between York and Lancaster. Elizabeth lived in retirement at Bermondsey for about fi ve years, dying in April 1492. Her will survives but in truth she had little to leave but her blessing because she had been entirely supported by the King and Queen during the last few years of her life and seems to have surrendered her moveable possessions to the Abbey. She was 55 and had lived a normal span for her generation. Like Margaret, she has had a bad posthumous press, being represented as greedy, cold and unscrupulous and the contemporary evidence is not entirely supportive. However her political ambition is largely unproven. It was Edward who decided to promote her kindred and he was able to do that at little cost to himself. Nor did he turn them into a powerful faction in the process; they were not a very amiable bunch, but they were no threat to anyone. Her supposed political interventions – for instance against the Duke of Clarence – are uncorroborated and for the most part her infl uence was entirely domestic and was confi ned to patronage. How real a threat the Woodville/Grey connection was to Richard in 1483 is very hard to determine but when it came to the point, they did not put up much of a fi ght. Nor was Elizabeth in any real sense the leader of such a party. She had some infl uence in the council after Edward's death and was certainly a symbolic fi gurehead but she did not have the spirit or intelligence to be a real leader – and in that she differed from Margaret. Elizabeth was the King's lover, who also happened to be married to him, and the rest of her image is largely constructed on that basis.

1. Catherine de Valois by Sylvester Harding; after Unknown artist (National Portrait Gallery, London)

2. The Marriage of Henry VI to Margaret of Anjou by Barrett (National Portrait Gallery, London)

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3. Elizabeth Woodville Queen of Edward IV by Johann Gottlieb Facius; or by Georg Siegmund Facius; after Thomas Kerrich (National Portrait Gallery, London)

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4. Elizabeth of York by Unknown artist (National Portrait Gallery, London)

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5. Catherine of Aragon by Unknown artist (National Portrait Gallery, London)

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6. Anne of Cleves by Hans Holbein the Younger

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4

The Queen as Helpmate: Elizabeth of York

With the marriage of Henry VII to Elizabeth of York in January 1486, we come upon yet another different type of Queen. Like her mother, Elizabeth was home bred and reared but, unlike her, she was of royal blood. Indeed, given the absence of any Salic Law in England, she had a far better claim to the throne than her husband. Richard's attempt to impugn her mother's marriage had been effective in the summer of 1483, and remained orthodox as long as the King lived, but it was not emphasized when he came to terms with the older Elizabeth in March 1484. The younger Elizabeth returned to court, was friendly with the Queen and her illegitimacy was simply taken for granted. In a later

age, Elizabeth and Henry might have reigned together, like Mary and William, but England was not yet ready for such an experiment. There had not been a ruling Queen since the Norman conquest and Henry, despite his dubious pedigree, had the advantages of being male and of unchallenged legitimacy.

1 He also, more critically, had led the army that had defeated and killed the childless Richard at Bosworth. Richard, by moving against Edward V, had split the Yorkist party right down the middle but, although his opponents continued to regard Elizabeth as Edward's legitimate daughter, in the circumstances of August 1485 nobody was pressing her claims as his heir. Nevertheless when she and Henry married both her supporters and the Lancastrian party came together to celebrate the union of the red rose and the white and the healing of the long and bloody feud that they represented.2

Elizabeth was Edward's first-born child and, as we have seen, her baptism in February 1466 had been an occasion for a display of family solidarity. From then until the birth of Edward junior in 1470, she was her father's heir and had immediately been deployed on the marriage market. This was in the interest of trying to heal his feud with the Nevilles following the fiasco of 1469. She was betrothed to George, the son of John Neville, Marquis Montague. However John blotted his copybook by betraying Edward in the summer of 1470 and then died fighting against him at Barnet in 1471. So the betrothal disappeared and was heard of no more. George, who must have been almost as young as his intended bride, was still a minor in 1480, and died unmarried in 1483. Apart from that, Elizabeth's public role was minimal. When the King 72

had his father's remains transferred from Pontefract to Fotheringhay in 1466, she was present as a very small child. Her uncle, Richard of Gloucester, then 14, was the chief mourner on that occasion. At about the same time Edward settled on her for life the manor of Great Lynford in Buckinghamshire. The reason for this rather curious gesture is unclear, but it may have been some compensation for the fact that she had no title. If she had been a boy she would have been created Duke of Cornwall at birth and enjoyed the revenues of the Duchy. As it was, presumably the profi ts of Great Lynford went towards paying some of her nursery expenses but the point of such an allocation is elusive. During the crisis of 1470–1 Elizabeth was with her mother and her sister Mary in sanctuary but presumably spent most of her time with a faithful nurse or nurses because the Queen was busy giving birth to her fi rst-born son.

When Edward went off to France in 1475, he left behind his will, naming the Queen as Governor of the Realm and allocating 10,000 crowns for the marriage portion of his elder daughter. There does not seem to have been any bridegroom in prospect at that time so she was still an available asset to be deployed diplomatically and that is just what Edward did at Pecquingy a few months later. When this treaty was signed in August 1475 one of the clauses was for a marriage between Elizabeth and Louis's young son, Charles, the Dauphin. The King of France was to provide a jointure of £60,000, and Mary was to cover as substitute in the event of anything untoward happening to the older child, who was then about 9. Apparently Elizabeth was known thereafter at the English court as Madame la Dauphine and was taught to speak and to write both French and Spanish in preparation for her future role. Contemporary reports relate that she was already a precocious reader and writer in English and she seems to have been generally a highly intelligent and teachable child, although there is no record of who was responsible for these accomplishments. Mary was to be taken out of her treaty commitment in 1481 by betrothal to the King of Denmark but died still well short of her majority, in the following year. In December 1482 Louis came to terms with Maximilian, the husband of Mary of Burgundy at Arras and effectively abandoned the Pecquingy agreement, which deprived Elizabeth of her expected dignity and her father of his peace of mind. The French action on this occasion was (allegedly) one of the causes

for Edward's premature demise in the following April.

We do not know how Elizabeth reacted to her father's unexpected death. She was 17 and must have been well aware of the political tensions that this situation created. At fi rst the prognosis was good. All the talk was of her brother's coronation and of his arrival from the Marches of Wales. Then, quite suddenly, there was panic. Her uncle Anthony had been arrested and Edward was coming

under the escort of another uncle, Richard, whom the Princess can hardly have known. At the news, her mother took fright, and bundled her and her siblings back into the Westminster sanctuary, which must have carried uncomfortable memories from her early childhood. At first this panic must have seemed rather unnecessary, as preparations for the coronation continued as though nothing had happened. Perhaps lulled into a sense of false security, or perhaps just not able to muster the willpower to resist, the Queen Dowager was persuaded to let her younger son join his brother

.3 Then there were rumours – Richard was plotting to take the Crown himself – and disaster struck. A preacher put up by the Protector denounced the Dowager's marriage as false and all her children as bastards. The older Elizabeth may (or may not) have been in touch with Lord Hastings via his mistress, Jane Shore, in an attempt to check this headlong progress. Jane had been Edward's last mistress and Elizabeth would almost certainly have known her. Within a few days, Hastings had paid for this alleged treason with his head, Richard was proclaimed king and rumours started arriving that Anthony and his brother had been executed in the north. On 6 July Richard was crowned and, shortly after, his two young nephews disappeared in the Tower. The distress of the women in sanctuary can only be imagined. Years later Bernard Andreas was to say of the young Elizabeth 'the love she bore her brothers and sisters was unheard of and almost incredible'. Even allowing for poetic licence that is strong testimony. From later evidence she seems to have had a loving and gentle disposition, which may have made her unfit for government, but was considered a great commendation in a consort. Unfortunately no contemporary commented upon how she endured the loss of her brothers, whose death was generally accepted long before she was allowed to emerge from the sanctuary.

Richard had no desire to make more enemies by storming Westminster so he sat down patiently to besiege it, using his household troops for the purpose. The intention was not to starve the occupants out but to intimidate them. The siege lasted for nine months before the Dowager finally came to terms and it must have been a very bleak autumn and winter for the girls, who were accustomed not only to their comforts but also to flattering attentions. Now they were simply Edward's

illegitimate offspring. In March 1484, as we have seen, the Dowager surrendered. In return for giving up all her pretensions and eschewing political activity, she was provided with a modest competence and houses to live in, ‘honest places of good name and fame’, while Richard undertook to marry her daughters to

‘gentlemen born’ with a small portion of 200 marks each. Presumably these were the best terms Elizabeth could get. Soon after there was talk of marrying Elizabeth to William Stillington, the illegitimate son of Robert, Bishop of Bath and Wells. Presumably an Episcopal bastard was deemed to be gentleman enough for a 74

royal one. However, neither the Dowager not her daughter would have anything to do with such a suggestion and the idea (if it was ever seriously proposed) was dropped. Meanwhile a much more momentous development had taken place at Rennes, although it is unlikely that it appeared that way at the time. By December 1483, Henry of Richmond, the Lancastrian pretender, had realized that Richard's actions in the summer had seriously alienated many Yorkist supporters. Although he had not been able to take advantage of the Duke of Buckingham's rebellion in the autumn, it had benefi ted him in several ways. Most importantly the dissident Yorkists, convinced that Edward V and his brother were dead, were now looking to him to unseat the usurper. To strengthen that alliance it was suggested to Henry that he should undertake to marry Elizabeth, now the senior Yorkist claimant. This can hardly have been done without the permission of the Queen Dowager and the story is that her Welsh physician, a man named Lewis, carried her letters to Henry undertaking to support his claim in return for the marr

iage.4 Towards the end of December, therefore, in Rennes Cathedral, Henry of Richmond solemnly swore that, when the opportunity presented itself, he would marry Elizabeth of York. The Princess herself was probably aware that this action had been taken, but her reaction is not known. It must have seemed a good deal less realistic than her erstwhile marriage to the Dauphin and when she came to terms with Richard, the Dowager had perforce to drop the whole idea. Romantic stories allege that the Princess kept up a clandestine correspondence with Henry despite her mother's withdrawal and even sent him a ring of betrothal but no evidence substantiates them. For about a year after her emergence from sanctuary, the young Elizabeth was at court, probably as some kind of attendant upon the Queen, Anne Neville, with whom she is said to have been friendly. It seems likely that Richard, who had not lost his suspicious nature, wanted to keep her where he could see her. When Anne died in March 1485 there were rumours that Richard would marry her himself. These rumours were so persistent that the King issued a formal denial – and indeed a bastard niece would hardly have been a suitable bride.5 Instead, Elizabeth was packed off to Sheriff Hutton in Yorkshire, where she remained throughout the summer.

The circumstances of Henry's landing and of his advance to Bosworth, are well known. He won his decisive victory on 22 August less by the strength of his own forces (which numbered barely 5,000) than by the dubious tactics of Lord Stanley and the Earl of Northumberland. The latter, having ostensibly brought his power to support Richard, did absolutely nothing. The former joined Henry just as the battle was turning in his favour. The victory in itself would probably have settled nothing if Richard had survived, but in fact he died on the fi eld of battle and his crown was symbolically transferred to Henry on the spot. Richard's failure to rally

committed support is something of a mystery and there was much talk at the time of divine judgement. Henry acted as king from the moment of his victory and even dated his reign from the day before the battle. Before he left Leicester for London, he sent Sir Robert Willoughby to Sheriff Hutton to secure the persons of Edward, Earl of Warwick, the 10-year-old son of the Duke of Clarence, and of Elizabeth, each of whom presented a potential threat to his claim. Warwick was immediately consigned to the Tower but Elizabeth was temporarily returned to the custody of her mother and accommodation was provided for them at Westminster. In September he appointed a new Chancellor and a new Lord Privy Seal, while Lord Dynham, the Treasurer, continued in his post. On 15 September he also summoned a parliament, which duly convened on 7 November. This assembly dutifully endorsed the King's title (thereby annulling his previous attainder), annulled the attainders of those who had been supporting him since 1483 and replaced them with some of his recent enemies. It also petitioned him to honour his two-year-old pledge to marry Elizabeth 'Daughter of King Edward IV'

.6 Nothing was said about her being Edward's heir, but as Giovanni de Giglis reported to the Pope, everyone considered this to be for the advantage of

the kingdom.7 Edward had been Duke of York as well as king, and that title had descended to his younger son. If Richard was dead, as was generally assumed, it was at the King's discretion whether to recognize Elizabeth as Duchess in her own right, and it is possible that he did so in November or December, although no instrument confi rms that. If it did happen, then she would have enjoyed the revenues of that Duchy for about a month before her wedding. Henry responded positively to the parliamentary petition, and even offered excuses for his delay: there had been plague in the capital, it was necessary to gather money, and so on. The ceremony eventually took place on 18 January 1486, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Bourchier, offi ciating. In fact the couple were suffi ciently near in kin to need a papal dispensation but so well disposed was Pope Innocent VIII that his Legate was able to give that verbally early in January in order not to hold up the ceremony. 8 It is probable, indeed, that Elizabeth was already pregnant, given the fact that Arthur was born just eight

months later, and the Legate may have had good cause to suspect that. Innocent certainly seem to have seen this wedding as the ideal way to end the feud which had so disrupted England, because when the written dispensation fi nally arrived in March, it addressed the King as ‘Henry of Lancaster’ and the Queen as ‘Elizabeth of York’, referring specifi cally to the healing of the dynastic breach. The people of London seem to have felt the same because we are told that they greeted the occasion with ‘bonfi res, dancing, songs and banquets’ in the streets. It should be noted, however, that when Parliament recognized Henry’s 76

title in November, it made no reference to Elizabeth and the King never allowed the slightest suggestion that his wife reinforced his position. The wedding was not immediately followed by a coronation. This was probably because Henry had more urgent things to attend to, although it might be because she was soon realised to be pregnant. It is also possible that the King had no desire to emphasize his consort's royal credentials at this stage, having, to his mind, done that quite suffi ciently in the wedding. Instead, the King took off on what was likely to be a diffi cult and even dangerous progress to the north, to the heartlands of Richard's support, while the Queen retreated to Winchester, where she, her mother and her sisters appear to have been the guests of the Queen Mother, Margaret Beaufort. The role of this formidable matriarch has been carefully studied and she seems to have performed many of the functions that might otherwise have fallen to the consort. She was extremely well endowed fi nancially, had a large affi nity of dependents, dispensed much patronage and seems to have lived virtually independently from her third husband, the Earl of Derby. Relations with the Queen Dowager may well have been diffi cult (the two women were much of an age) and it may well have been that tension rather than any political suspicion that caused the older Elizabeth to retreat to Bermondsey in 1487. Margaret seems to have assumed a propriatorial interest in the young Elizabeth, which her mother may well have resented, although the Queen herself seems to have been completely relaxed about it, as she was about most things. Arthur was born on 19 September 1486 at Winchester and Elizabeth, who seems to have had a diffi cult labour, went down with a fever immediately afterwards. This was not apparently thought to be life threatening but it did mean that she had to be carried to her churching. Her mother stood as godmother at the christening but we know little else about the ceremony apart from the fact that it was nearly wrecked by the late arrival of the Earl of Oxford, one of the godfathers. Like her mother, Elizabeth was destined to become a baby factory. In a married life of seventeen years she bore her husband at least six children who are recorded, and several others who are not recorded and may have been still births – including the daughter whom she died giving birth to. Her fertility equalled that of her mother, but she was less fortunate with survivals. When the Queen Dowager died in 1492, fi ve of her seven daughters were still alive and of her three sons only one had died a natural death. When the Queen

died in 1503

she left two daughters and one son and, although it was Henry's survival that saved the dynasty, his mother had in other respects been unfortunate. Henry's critics later claimed that the King's relationship with his wife was lacking in warmth or affection but her frequent pregnancies and the devastating effect that her death had on him point to a quite different conclusion. He is rumoured to

have been enamoured of Katherine Herbert, a daughter of the Earl of Pembroke, with whom he was brought up for some years, but that was before his betrothal to Elizabeth. The Princess was warned about Katherine in the autumn of 1485

but seems not to have taken her rivalry seriously – and in that she was fully justifi ed. Unlike his father in law, Henry was a man of great continence and although he obviously made full use of his wife he seems never to have strayed after other women, a characteristic in which he resembled his pious namesake and predecessor.

Financial provision for the Queen is something of a mystery because the evidence is not entirely consistent. Apart from the problem over the Duchy of York there are suggestions that she was deemed to have inherited the lands of the Earldom of March because she appears to have been holding property belonging to that patrimony in Herefordshire in September 1486, long before she had received any formal grant. Parliament also authorized her to 'sue in her own name … all manner of rents etc. due to her …', which would have been pointless if she had not been holding property. Later, in 1494, certain lands of the earldom in Ireland were described as being 'in the king's hands in the right of Elizabeth the Queen Consort', which points in the same dir

ection.9 However, it was not until 26 November 1487, following her coronation, that any formal grant was made directly to her – a long list of lands and other properties being conferred for life. These seem to have been the same as those that had been granted to her mother in March 1486, and confi rm other references to the transfer of that patrimony.10 In March 1488 she was granted certain royalties and other rents and both these grants were confi rmed on 1 February 1492, about three months before her mother died, when she was also granted the reversion of some of her grandmother's property.11 Consequently, unlike any of her predecessors, and because the grants were made in this piecemeal fashion, it is not possible to say what Elizabeth's properties as consort were actually worth In 1495 she was granted the castle and lordship of Fotheringhay in Northamptonshire but in the same year was noted to be so deeply in debt that she was forced to pawn

£500 worth of plate, and to borrow £2,000 from her husband to satisfy her creditors. The suggestion is that this was rather due to excessive generosity than to inadequate income. It is probably safe to conclude that Henry would have wanted to make suitable provision for his Queen, and that would have meant committing between £4,000 and £5,000 of annual revenue but it is impossible to say just how that endowment was put together.

During the summer of 1487 Henry was much preoccupied with the rebellion that came to an end at Stoke on 16 June. After that he had to try to stabilize the situation in Ireland, where there had been much support for Lambert Simnel's 78

imposture; it was not until November that he got around to crowning his Queen. When it came, it was worth the wait. Elizabeth set out by barge from Greenwich on 24 June and the King welcomed her at the Tower, where they spent the night. The following day she processed on her own through the City to Westminster, her train being borne by her sister Cecily. The earls of Oxford, Derby and Nottingham acted as Stewards for the occasion and the ceremony was performed by the new Archbishop, John Morton. Henry watched the proceedings from 'a closed lattice box between the altar and the pulpit' and, as was customary, the Queen presided at the following banquet. Her mother, apparently, was not present although whether this was by the King's orders or not is unclear. However her stepbrother the Marquis of Dorset, who had been under arrest for his suspected part in the Simnel rising, was specially released to attend.

Thereafter the Queen can only be occasionally observed going about her business. She was in a way a model consort, never overstepping the traditional limitations, so comments upon her activities are comparatively rare. Her accounts show her both giving and receiving gifts, not only from the humble, who brought her cherries and apples, but also from the powerful and well connected. Her goodwill was obviously worth cultivating.

12 Her household provided a refuge for several of Richard's former servants; Edward Chaderton, his Treasurer of the Chamber, for example became her Chancellor. There was nothing particularly surprising about that as both Margaret Beaufort and the King himself had strong Yorkist contingents in their households but they were rather less welcoming to those with close connections to the previous regime. Although there are a number of contemporary testimonies to her intelligence and, as we have seen, she had several languages, she was not to any great extent a patron of scholars and even Bernard Andrée did not credit her with such a function. When she appears as a patron of letters it is usually in association with Margaret Beaufort, who is much better known for that sort of patronage. They both, for example, sponsored Caxton's edition of the *Fifteen Oes* in 1491, and jointly gave a copy of Wykyn de Worde's edition of Walter Hilton's *Scala Perfectionis* to her Lady Margery Roos in 1494. The two ladies were also associated occasionally in pious benefactions and were,

along with the King and the royal children, the subjects of the prayers of many endowed chantries. They were together created Ladies of the Garter in 1488, and when Elizabeth became Chief Lady in 1495 no jealousy seems to have resulted. Margaret was 53 in that year and Elizabeth 29, but despite this difference relations seem to have remained entirely harmonious. In this, as in so many other matters, Elizabeth seems to have remained true to her motto,

'humble and reverent'. After a chequered childhood and a turbulent adolescence, her married life was singularly peaceful. Insofar as she features as an independent

patron, it was in the most peaceful of arts. She loved the revels – minstelsy and disguisings – paying both William Cornish and Richard Fayrfax for what must have been specially commissioned pieces. She kept a pack of greyhounds, which were intended for hare coursing, but was not otherwise known for any keenness on hunting. There is also a hint that she had some skill in draftmanship and a knowledge of architecture because when Robert Vertue rebuilt the palace at Greenwich for King Henry he worked from plans that had been drawn up by the Queen. There seems to have been more to this self-effacing woman than meets the eye.

Elizabeth's independent political role is equally obscure. On one occasion she was appealed to by one of her tenants in Wales against some arbitrary action by the King's uncle, Jasper Duke of Bedford. Instead of referring this complaint to the King, as might have been expected, the Queen dealt with it herself, and wrote a sharp letter to Jasper, which seems to have had the desired effect.

13 The queen could never be ignored, especially when it came to promotions within the household, but her normal tactics seem to have been subtle and 'feminine'

and thus escaped the attentions of the commentators. Her part in planning the education of her children is typical in this respect. Both Arthur and Henry were given a fi rst-class grounding in classical humanism and this is normally attributed to the infl uence of Margaret Beaufort over her son, but their fi rst steps in learning would have been taken 'among the women' and would have been directed by Elizabeth. Arthur was subsequently taught by the poet Bernard Andrée, who later declared that he had made him familiar with the works of Homer, Vergil, Ovid, Terence, Thucidides, Livy and several others, while Henry was entrusted to the care of John Skelton. The latter also claimed full credit for the young Prince's accomplishments:

… I gave him drink of the sugared well

Of Helicon's waters crystalline,

Acquainting him with the muses nine.

Both these tutors were appointed by the King, as was Skelton's successor, William Hone, who also taught Princess Mary. Hone may well not have come on the scene until after Elizabeth's death, but both Skelton and Andrée were functioning in the 1490s. Skelton and Hone were Cambridge men, and it has been deduced that Margaret found them after consultations with her friend John Fisher but the evidence for this is purely circumstantial. Given Elizabeth's known fondness for music and the excellence of the musical training that both Henry and Margaret certainly had, it is easy to conclude that the Queen's hand was behind at least some of their education.

Somewhat more visible is her involvement in the matrimonial fortunes of her siblings and children. Her sister Cecily, the closest to her in age, was married at some date between 25 November 1487 (when she bore the Queen's train) and 1

June 1488, to John, Viscount Welles, who was the King's uncle of the half blood (he was an illegitimate brother of Jasper Tudor, the King's full uncle). John had been involved in Buckingham's rebellion in 1483, and had escaped to join Henry in Britanny. He was recognized as Baron Welles when his attainder was reversed in 1485 and he was created Viscount in the summer of 1487. He received several substantial grants from the Crown and his marriage to Cecily was obviously part of his general build up. He died on 9 February 1498 leaving only a daughter, Ann, who died shortly after her father. Cecily remarried in 1503, after her sister was dead. Anne, her next surviving sister, was married on 4 February 1495 to Thomas Howard junior, son and heir of the Earl of Surrey. Thomas was to be a great man under Henry VIII, succeeding his father as Duke of Norfolk in 1524, but Anne did not live to be Duchess of Norfolk, dying in 1511. They had no children who survived. Catherine, the next eldest, was married in October of the same year to Sir William Courtenay, who was to be created Earl of Devon in 1511 and who died about a month later. Their son, Henry, created Marquis of Exeter in 1525, eventually paid for his Plantagenant blood with his head, being executed by Henry VIII in 1538. Catherine died in 1517. Elizabeth's youngest sibling, Bridget, took the veil at Dartford at some time before 1500 but whether this was by choice or because the Queen failed to fi nd a suitable husband for her is not clear. All these marriages were offi cially provided by the King, and in the case of Viscount Welles that was obviously so, but it would have been normal practice for the Queen to act as broker, particularly in obtaining the consent of her sisters to whom, as we have seen, she was very close. There are a few hints and suggestions in the records that this was the case, although specifi c evidence is scarce. Only one of her own children was married in her lifetime and for that little more than her consent was required. Almost from the moment of his accession, Henry had been keen on the idea of an alliance with Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, not least because he foresaw trouble with France over the Duchy of Britanny. Duke Francis II died on 9 September 1488, leaving his young daughter

Anne as his heir and at the mercy of Charles VIII of France. On 10 February 1489 Henry signed the Treaty of Redon with Anne's council in an attempt to safeguard the independence of the Duchy.

15 However, distracted by the appearance of Perkin Warbeck in Ireland, he was unable to prevent Charles from divorcing his existing wife in order to marry Anne. That wedding took place on 6 December 1491. Meanwhile Henry had been seeking his remedies. A marriage between the 2-year-old Prince Arthur and the 3-year-old Catherine, Ferdinand's

youngest daughter, had been the subject of diplomatic exchanges since 1488, and the Treaty of Medina del Campo on the 28 March 1489 affected a formal agreement.

16 This has to be seen as part of the same strategy as the Treaty of Redon but it did not work against Charles, who simply shrugged off the threat. Eventually Henry made a gesture of war with France, and allowed himself to be bought off at Etaples in November 1492 without doing anything for the Bretons, but in securing the marriage agreement he had achieved the other of his two main objectives. The Trastamara were one of the most ancient and prestigious ruling houses in Europe and it was a great coup for Henry that they should be prepared to commit one of their daughters to his heir. Nevertheless for the time being nothing happened. This was partly because of the youth of both parties, and partly because of the trouble caused by Perkin Warbeck, who was active from 1492 until 1497. Ferdinand was understandably reluctant to commit his daughter to a realm that was threatened by a pretender. The marriage treaty was confi rmed on 1 October 1496, but still nothing happened. It was later alleged that Ferdinand made any formal ceremony conditional upon the execution of the Earl of Warwick, who appeared to be the catalyst for most of the trouble, but no contemporary evidence confi rms that. Instead the fi rst proxy marriage between Catherine and Arthur took place in May 1499, and the Treaty of Alliance was confi rmed two months later. 17 By that time Warbeck was in custody and the threat had all but disappeared. A further proxy ceremony took place in November 1500, by which time both Warwick and Warbeck had been executed. Catherine fi nally arrived in England in October 1501.Her dowry had been fi xed at 200,000

Spanish escudos (about £60,000), half of which was paid on her arrival. The other half was due at the time of her marriage but was never paid and remained as a bone of contention.

The celebrations that attended the fi nal and personal nuptials between Arthur and Catherine were protracted and elaborate. The City of London provided a costly allegorical spectacle – a series of pageants in six separate scenes – the fi rst of which, representing St Katherine and St Ursula, was set upon London Bridge. It is not known

who devised these pageants, but knowing Elizabeth's fondness for this kind of display it is probable that she played a part. The fi fth pageant represented the Temple of God, and was set at the Standard in Cheapside. It was there that the King and Queen took their stands, and witnessed the near blasphemous representation of Henry VII as God the Father and Arthur as God the Son. This noble King, says Prelacy (the presenter), has now ordained a marriage between his son and Katheryn, 'the kyngys dowgthyr of Spayn'.

18 Flattery could hardly go further. The sequel, however, was tragic rather than romantic. Whether the marriage was ever consummated was later to be the subject of fi erce debate and 82

the memories of those who had been close to the couple varied. The principal evidence for consummation came from Father Geraldini, her confessor. Arthur was 15 and she 17, so it is perfectly possible, but he seems to have been a feeble youth physically so Catherine's later denials carry conviction. The hopeful couple were despatched to Ludlow in the Welsh Marches, the centre of Arthur's jurisdiction as Prince of Wales, and there, on 2 April 1502, Arthur died. Both his parents were devastated; Henry by the loss of his heir and Elizabeth by the loss of her son. Edmund, their third son, had lived for only two weeks in the summer of 1500, so the dynasty now hung by the slender thread of Henry's life. We are told that Elizabeth went, as her duty required, to comfort her husband in his loss but was so overcome by emotion that he had to comfort her

.19 The news, as Leland put it, had 'smote her sorrowful to the heart'. Apparently she reassured him that she was still young enough to repair the loss and that turned out to be a fatal mistake.

Edmund's short life had not been a good omen, but the couple decided to try again, and by the autumn of the same year, Elizabeth was pregnant once more. On 2 February 1503 the Queen was delivered of a daughter in the Royal lodgings at the Tower. The child was named Catherine, after the widowed Princess of Wales, but she lived only a few days. Then, just over a week later, Elizabeth herself succumbed to puerperal fever and died on her 37th birthday. As Polydore Vergil wrote: 'the queen herself died in childbirth. She was a woman of such character that it would have been hard to judge whether she displayed more of majesty and dignity in her life than of wisdom and moderation …'

20

There had been a great and perhaps unusual level of affection between the couple and Henry 'privily departed into a solitary place and would no man should resort to him'.

21 Astrologers had assured him that she would live to be at least 80, but then astrologers had assured her mother before her birth that she would be a boy. The star gazers did not have a good success rate with Elizabeth. In due course her body was conveyed to Westminster and

interred in the still-incomplete chapel, which was to be named after her husband. Her funeral was formal and elaborate as became her status and cost the princely sum of £2,800. Alone among the queens we have so far considered, Elizabeth died in her husband's lifetime, and was thus accorded the full honours due to the sovereign's consort. Just over six years later Henry joined her in the same tomb, which was fi nally completed by his son, with the magnifi cent memorial by Torrigiano that still marks the spot. Although Elizabeth did not live to see them completed, negotiations were already far advanced for the marriage of her elder daughter Margaret at the time of her death. Relations with Scotland had been slowly improving since James III's abortive invasion of 1487. James had died in 1488 and his young heir was anxious

to come to terms. A commission was issued in June 1495 to negotiate a marriage between James IV and Margaret, then aged six. Elizabeth had acquiesced in this, but is alleged to have begged her husband not to surrender custody of the child until she had reached the minimum age for cohabitation, whic

h was 12.22

As it turned out, she need not have worried because James changed his mind and received the pretender Perkin Warbeck in November of the same year, with royal honours. It was only when James became disillusioned with Warbeck and abandoned him in July 1496 that the threads could be picked up again. Progress was again slow and it was not until July 1497 that fresh instructions were issued to Richard Fox, Lord Privy Seal and Bishop of Durham, who was Henry's most experienced negotiator. The result was a series of short truces, culminating in the indefi nite Truce of Ayton in February 1498, but there was no renewal of the marriage negotiation at that stage. It was not until Warbeck had been executed in 1499, and a reassuring mission had gone from Spain to Scotland, that that subject could be raised again. A full peace treaty and marriage agreement was fi nally concluded on 24 January 1502, by which time Margaret was already 12.

23 The deaths, fi rst of Arthur and then of the Queen herself, put all these arrangements on hold, and it was not until August 1503 that the Princess fi nally travelled north to meet her future husband. If Elizabeth had entertained doubts about entrusting her eldest daughter to so remote a land, she was spared the need to see it happening.

Meanwhile, Catherine was left in England without a husband and Henry without a wife. When the news of Arthur's death reached him, Ferdinand immediately demanded the return of his daughter and the refund of the part of her dowry that he had already paid. This, it soon transpired, was a negotiating position and by September of the same year an agreement had been drafted to maintain the alliance by transferring the hand of the 17-year-old Catherine to the 11-year-old Henry junior. This new treaty was fi nally ratifi ed on 30 September

1503.24 It was realized that a papal dispensation would be necessary because of the degree of consanguinity created by Catherine's fi rst marriage but no diffi culty seems to have been anticipated. The marriage was to be celebrated as soon as Henry reached his fourteenth birthday, that is on or after 28 June 1505. The papal bureaucracy fi nally ground out a dispensation at some point during the spring of that year, but by then Henry had changed his mind and caused his son to repudiate the agreement as soon as he had passed 14. By then circumstances had changed in Spain too, because Isabella of Castile died on 26 November 1504. Not only had Isabella been keener on Catherine's second marriage than Ferdinand, she had also been Queen of Castile in her own right and although in her will she attempted to make Ferdinand Governor of the realm, her heir 84

was not her husband but her elder daughter Joanna. Joanna was married to the Archduke Philip of the Netherlands and the mother of two promising sons, but many Castilian nobles did not fancy the alien Philip as King Consort, preferring the terms of Isabella's will. A sharp political struggle then ensued, during which Philip and Joanna went to Spain and successfully asserted their rights. However in 1506 Philip died and Joanna (it was conveniently alleged) became deranged. This enabled Ferdinand to reassert himself as Regent, but it also meant that, if Joanna was deemed disqualifi ed the next heir to the throne was Catherine. She thus became one complication too many for her father who was quite happy for her to remain in England, marriage or no marriage. Poor Catherine, now aged 20, was thus left in limbo as Dowager Princess of Wales, without a role and with inadequate fi nancial support. Her endowment of one-third of the revenues of Wales had come to an end with Arthur's death and Henry cancelled the replacement allowance of £1,200 a year when her betrothal to the new Prince of Wales was cancelled. Thereafter he made her only spasmodic payments, apparently as the spirit move

d him.25

Meanwhile, both the widowed kings were on the look out for new partners. Ferdinand took the opportunity to end his long-running feud with France and signed the treaty of Blois with Louis XII in October 1505, one of the conditions of which was that he should marry Louis's niece, Germaine de Foix, and that wedding duly took place on 18 March 1506. This not only strengthened Ferdinand's hand in Spain; it also distanced him from the King of England. There was never any question of hostilities, but relations cooled. Henry was less successful, and perhaps less determined. His fi rst target seems to have been the widowed Queen Joan of Naples, who was Ferdinand's niece, and his envoys sent a very precise physical description of the lady from Valencia in J

une 1505.26 Ferdinand declared himself in favour of the proposal but nothing eventually came of it. However attractive Joan may have been, she would, it appears, have been no substitute for Elizabeth. Neighbouring princes were also keen to take advantage of the King's availability. The Archduke Philip offered his sister Margaret, the widowed Duchess of Savoy, and a treaty was actually signed to effect

that in 1506. Louis XII proffered his niece, Margaret of Angouleme. In the event it was the ladies themselves who declined the prospect but Henry's pursuit was dutiful rather than enthusiastic. He was clearly more interested in using the negotiations for diplomatic purposes than he was in actually getting married again. It may have been a factor that his own health was in slow decline. The main purpose of marrying again would have been to strengthen his dynasty by begetting more children and it may well be that by about 1505 Henry was beginning to feel that that feat was beyond him. For whatever reason, he did not marry again and when he died in April 1509 he

left an adult son (just) and a widowed daughter-in-law, both ready to start again. The rumours that he had at one time designs on Catherine himself appear to be without foundation and, knowing the King's scrupulosity, are intrinsically improbable. His last matrimonial move was on behalf of his younger daughter, Mary, then aged 11. On 1 October 1508 he completed a treaty with Margaret of Savoy, his erstwhile intended and by then governor of the Netherlands, to wed her to Margaret's eight-year-old charge, the Archduke Charles – later the Emperor Charles V – but once again the treaty proved abortive.

27

Of all the women we have so far considered, Elizabeth of York appears to have been the most gentle and the most conventional of queens. Despite the intrinsic strength of her political position, she never seems to have made the slightest attempt to exploit it and although her position as the heir of York is constantly alluded to there is never any suggestion that it threatened the King's position. Her infl uence was nearly all behind the scenes. It should not be discounted for that reason but is extraordinarily diffi cult to assess. After her death one commentator described her as 'one of the most gracious and best beloved princesses of the world'

28, while the Venetian ambassador called her 'a very handsome woman, and in conduct very able'. She was an ideal helpmate, and also discharged her parental duty with notable success. In spite of the bitter disappointments of Edmund's and Arthur's deaths, she left two children who were to dominate the succeeding centuries: Henry VIII, the father of Mary and Elizabeth, and Margaret, the grandmother of Mary of Scotland and great grandmother of James VI and I. *This page intentionally left blank*

5

The Queen as Foreign Ally: Catherine of Aragon and

Anne of Cleves

Catherine had come to England in 1501 as the pledge of an alliance between Henry VII and her father, Ferdinand of Aragon. The marriage

that had sealed that alliance had lasted only a few months and, at the age of 17, Catherine had been left a widow. In order to maintain the alliance, and avoid repaying that part of her dowry that he had already received, Henry had then proposed and Ferdinand had agreed to betroth her to Arthur's younger brother, Henry, a step for which a dispensation from consanguinity was required. At fi rst it had been suspected that Arthur had left his widow pregnant, but by the time that the dispensation was issued it was clear that that was not the case. It was, however, assumed that the union had been consummated, in spite of the protestations of her

duenna, Donna Elvira, and of Catherine herself, because it was the consummation rather than the ceremony of marriage that created the consanguinity. 1 The second marriage, however, had not taken place. The kings drifted apart and in June 1505, when the younger Henry reached his fourteenth birthday, his father caused him to repudiate the agreement. This should have been the signal for Catherine to go home but political circumstances in Castile made her presence in Spain unwelcome to her father, as we have seen, so she remained in England as the Dowager Princess of Wales. In 1507, when she was 22 and still unmarried, her father had accredited her as his ambassador in England, thus giving her a unique formal recognition. 2 It had been common in the past for royal consorts to act as *de facto* representatives of their families in England – but Catherine was not such a consort, and there was no precedent for an unmarried woman to act as an ambassador. Her role proved to be complex and exacting because Ferdinand's remarriage had left him in alliance with France, a move that Henry had sought to counter by closer ties to the Habsburgs. It was for that reason that she found herself involved in a negotiation with Maximilian for a marriage between the King of England and her own sister Juana, the widow of King Phillip. The fact that Juana was alleged to be insane does not appear to have deterred either of the negotiators. It is not surprising that Catherine

soon called for reinforcements. She did not trust her nominal colleague in the embassy, the long serving but by now somewhat ineffectual Dr De Puebla, and asked her father to send a suitable nobleman as her colleague.

3 As his interests would be directly threatened by the proposed marriage, he responded swiftly and Don Guitierre Gomez de Fuensalida reached England on 22 February 1508. Fuensalida was inexperienced and inept, but he was disposed to listen to Catherine, who in turn had learned from the much-despised De Puebla. 4 It was probably as much the result of Henry's deteriorating health as of the diplomatic efforts of the Spaniards, but the marriage never happened, and when the King died on 21 April 1509, she found herself facing a completely different situation. During the lean years between 1502 and 1507, when she had had nothing to do and very little money, and while her remaining Spanish servants drifted away or got married, Catherine had consoled herself with pious exercises. She had also convinced herself that it was the will of God that she should marry Prince Henry. This conviction reconciled her to staying in England and survived his formal repudiation of the agreement in 1505. Indeed the latter was a diplomatic chess move and the young Prince's true feelings are unknown. The very next year he was referring to her as his 'most dear and well beloved consort, the princess my wife …' but that may also have been a diplomatic move intended to press Maximilian. When Henry VIII came to the throne his relations with his sisterin-law can only be deduced. They must have known each other well by sight and that may have been suffi cient to establish a mutual attraction. At almost 18, Henry was a magnifi cent specimen, with his maternal grandfather's imposing physique – already head and shoulders taller than most of his servants. At this stage of her life Catherine was apparently slender and petite, auburn haired and pretty – if Michael Sittow's portrait is to be trusted. Whether, however, they had had any opportunity to become familiar with each other, we do not know. According to Fuensalida (who was not the sharpest of observers) the young Prince had been carefully chaperoned right up to the moment of his accession and kept busy with his books and physical exercises. At the same time Catherine lived at court after her allocation of Durham House was withdrawn in November 1505 and her ambassadorial duties required frequent attendance. It is certainly

true that Henry's father gave him no formal duties or responsibilities, beyond his purely notional responsibilities as Prince of Wales, but his virtual seclusion is unlikely. Unlike his brother at a similar age, he seems never to have visited the Marches, let alone lived there. 5

Nevertheless the speed and effectiveness with which he seized the reins of government in May 1509 appears to give the lie to Fuensalida's description of a boy brought up 'almost like a young damsel'. Years later, and in very different

circumstances, the chronicler Edward Hall attributed his actions to the initiative of the council that he had inherited from his father, and whereas that may have been true in respect of his rapid moves against the unpopular Richard Empson and Edmund Dudley, it is unlikely to have been true of his marriage. Hall wrote:

'… the king was moved by some of his council that it should be honourable and profi table to his realm to take to wife the Lady Katherine, late wife to his brother Prince Arthur deceased …'

6

In fact his council seems to have been taken by surprise. Henry himself later claimed that he had been piously acting in accordance with his father's dying wish, but on 27 April, fi ve days after the old king's death, the Council was unaware of any such instruction. On that day they assured Fuensalida that their master was completely uncommitted, and even added that he would be unlikely to consider his sister-in-law because of scruples ov

er the dispensation.7 Then, a few days later, the ambassador was summoned back, and began his interview with a defensive speech, retailing all the diffi culties in Anglo-Spanish relations. Ferdinand had delayed giving his consent to the proposed marriage between his grandson Charles and the King's sister Mary and he had dallied interminably about paying the balance of Catherine's original dowry. At that point Henry, who had been waiting impatiently in an adjoining room, interrupted the proceedings with a message. What he wanted, he declared, was a triple alliance between himself, the Emperor and Ferdinand to curb the ambitions of France, and to that end he intended to marry Catherine forthwith. 8 All the wearying diffi culties about the dowry, about Mary's betrothal and about Catherine's status, were simply swept aside. Fuensalida's erstwhile colleague was about to become Queen and his main duty now was to facilitate that as quickly as possible. The Princess was understandably jubilant. Through all the slights to which she had been subjected and all the diffi culties of being a female ambassador linked to a man who turned out to be an arrogant and foolish colleague, her faith in ultimate

success had never wavered. Only at the very end, in March 1509, had she apparently given way to a brief fi t of despair. Now she was vindicated and being the pious soul that she was she attributed the entire astonishing reversal to God. He had heard and answered her pleas as only He could do, turning the King's heart, which (like that of all princes and governors) was in His hand alone. The events of these dramatic days between April and June of 1509 made an indelible impression upon her mind.

Henry and Catherine were married on 11 June in the Franciscan church at Greenwich and crowned together at Westminster on midsummer's day.

9 This was

unprecedented. Richard II, Henry V, Henry VI, Edward IV and Henry VII had all been unmarried at the time of their accessions but Richard and Henry VI had 90

succeeded as minors and all their respective Queens had been crowned separately. Only in the case of Henry VIII did marriage intervene between accession and coronation in a way that made this unique event possible. Despite the fact that the King's Council remained largely unchanged, the atmosphere of the court was transformed. Archbishop Warham remained as Chancellor, Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester, remained Lord Privy Seal and the Earl of Surrey remained Treasurer, but there was a new king and that was what mattered. The fact that Henry was lavishly praised by humanist scholars on the look out for patronage is less important than the general contemporary evidence of how full of life and joy the royal couple were at this point. Their coronation was celebrated with a magnifi cent tournament, featuring the Knights of Pallas and the Knights of Diana, who symbolized that odd mixture of Italian humanism and Burgundian chivalry that was Henry's distinctive trademark. There had been no such tournament in England since the high days of Edward IV. Although he had had no enthusiasm for these sports himself, Henry VII had made sure that his son had been instructed by the very best masters-at-arms and, at the time of his accession, Henry VIII had the reputation of being the fi nest jouster in the land. This may not have been entirely deserved, but he was certainly very profi cient, and for the next twenty years his enthusiasm for the sport was inexhaustible. On many subsequent occasions he was to enter the lists in person, but not this time. Jousting was a dangerous sport, even for the most accomplished and he was probably persuaded that the last thing England needed at such an auspicious juncture was for any misfortune to befall him. Instead he did honour to his mistress with 'noble triumphs and goodly shows', which featured the Queen's symbol of the pomegranate 'gilded with fi ne gold' in every conceivable place. The joy of these days was somewhat tempered by the death at the end of June of the King's grandmother, Margaret Beaufort, 'a woman of singular wisdom and policy, and also of most virtuous life' as the chro

nicler put it.10 She had, however, died full of years and honours and although her obsequies were fully observed there is no sign that the King mourned unduly. He was too full of the opportunities of his own sunrise. Catherine was equally happy. 'These kingdoms … are in great peace, and entertain much love to the king my lord and to me. Our

time is spent in continual festival', she wrote to her father, who was as surprised and gratifi ed as anyone by what had happened.

For the time being Henry was behaving like the overgrown schoolboy that he was. He would burst in on Catherine and her ladies at unseasonable hours and in all sorts of elaborate disguises, expecting her to be endlessly diverted and amused. She responded to this exuberance with tolerance and good humour and all the evidence suggests that at this time their relationship was both warm and loving.

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They had, after all, much in common. Their intellectual tastes and educational background were very similar, allowing for the gender differences of the time. Both loved fi nery and display, both rode well and hunted with enthusiasm. Catherine took great pains with her physical appearance and was punctiliously deferential to her Lord in public – and probably in private too. He was, after all, worthy of her respect. He was not only an effective and conscientious king, he was also an intelligent man, with a splendid body. What more could any girl want?

It is probable that her piety was both deeper and more heartfelt than his – he was always inclined to be rather intellectual in his faith – but the deep fl aws of personality that the strains of life were subsequently to make only too clear were not obvious in the Henry of 1509. Meanwhile, Catherine was far more than a bedfellow. Her credentials as an ambassador had, of course, come to an end with the old king's death and had not been renewed in the new circumstances but her function continued. It is unlikely that Henry needed any prompting in the direction of alliance with Ferdinand, or war with France, but if he did, Catherine provided it. Her political experience was far greater than his and her intelligence just as sharp. Added to which the King was at ease in her company – far more so than with leading councillors such as William Warham or Sir Henry Marney. How much Catherine may have known of the domestic affairs of England is uncertain. Her knowledge of the language had come on by leaps and bounds since she was accredited as ambassador and now as Queen she was no longer inclined to seek the companionship of Spanish-speaking familiars. Instead she showed an unobtrusive but effective capacity for friendship and quietly rebuilt the good will of some aristocratic families, which the old king had treated with indifference or hostility – the Duke of Clarence's widowed daughter, Margaret Pole being a good case in point.

The nature of her sexual relationship with her husband can only be deduced from circumstantial evidence. The chances are that both were virgins when they married and although that would not be surprising in the case of a well brought-up royal princess – even if she was 24 – it would have been unusual for such a vigorous specimen of young

manhood as Henry. However his name had never been linked with any woman, even in the most salacious gossip, and it seems that in that respect at least, Fuensalida was right. When it came to the test, it seems likely that Henry's sexual performance never had the stallion-like qualities that he liked to pretend and that it was left to his equally inexperienced but perhaps more worldly wise wife to coax him into action. If that was the case, she succeeded very well, because she conceived within weeks of her wedding – a circumstance that seems to have given her husband rather more confi dence than he deserved. Catherine's pregnancy was part of the general euphoria of the court 92

in the autumn of 1509. There were further jousts and this time Henry wore her favour in the lists and laid his trophies at her feet. Then there was a hitch, which looks more ominous with hindsight than it did at the time. In January 1510

the Queen was delivered of a child – only instead of the healthy son that her mother-in-law had managed in similar circumstances, this child was a girl, born prematurely and dead. In Spain, Ferdinand heard the news at the same time that he learned that his daughter's other great project – the Anglo-Spanish treaty of alliance, was sig

ned and sealed.11

The royal couple shrugged off the misfortune of the still-birth. These things happened. They were both young and, more importantly, had proved their fertility. Within a few weeks, as the diplomatic preliminaries to war with France continued to build, Catherine conceived again. For the time being, at least, there was nothing wrong with their sexual relationship – and the Queen was certainly a trier. This time her pregnancy ran its full course and on New Year's day, 1511, she was delivered of a son. The whole country exploded with joy. The prince was named Henry, and baptized with great magnifi cence. The King, with what everyone thought was a proper sense of priorities, made a pilgrimage to Walsingham to give thanks for the birth of his heir, before turning his attention to more secular festivities. When celebrating, the King's mind was nothing if not conventional. A great tournament and feast was decreed, and Henry appeared in the guise of 'Coeur loyale' to win the chief prize (of course) and lay it at Catherine's feet.

12 It is to be hoped that she, recently convalescent and newly churched, was suitably impressed. Their joy, however, and that of the country, was shortlived, because on 22 February the young Prince died in his magnifi cent cradle at Richmond. We have no idea what killed him. There was no recorded birth defect and the modern suspicion would be an infection of some kind but at the time it was seen as a judgement of God. Modern research suggests that something like 40 per cent of aristocratic children who were born alive failed to survive their fi rst year but without the benefi t of such knowledge, Henry and Catherine were devastated. If it was a judgement – who

was being judged?13 In the event of a miscarriage or still birth it was customary to blame the woman but this was neither and the Queen's life was conspicuously blameless. Could it be Henry himself who was under the cross and, if so, why? Catherine spent agonized hours in prayer, seeking for a solution. The King, more resilient or less introspective, after a brief agony of self-pity, turned his attention to other things. In May he sent an expeditionary force of 1,000 archers under Lord Darcy to assist Ferdinand against the Moors. The result was a fi asco because the King of Spain changed his mind and sent them home again. Henry would probably have been a good deal more chagrined than he was if he had not been at the same time engaged

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in joining the Holy League, with Ferdinand and the Pope, which gave him the perfect pretext for the war that he was seeking against France. He shrugged off his disappointment over Darcy's dismissal and began to prepare for a much larger expedition in 1512, which was to form part of an Anglo-Spanish attack on Aquitaine, designed (in Henry's eyes at least) to recover England's 'ancient right'

to Gascony, which had been lost 60 years before.

14

So Henry had got his war but success continued to elude him. The Marquis of Dorset duly arrived at Fuentarrabia in June 1512 to fi nd none of the support services promised by Ferdinand in place and he was stranded without supplies and with no agreed plan of campaign. Meanwhile the Spaniards used his presence as a cover for the seizure of Navarre. After several weeks of inaction, the English force became mutinous and taking advantage of an illness that had laid low their commander the offi cers hired ships and returned to England. Henry was furious and Ferdinand self-righteous. 'The King of Aragon was sore discontent with their departing, for they spent much money and substance in his country, and said openly that if they had tarried he would have invaded G

uienne …'15

Whether there was any truth in this protestation we do not know but the King of England certainly felt betrayed. He was too deeply committed to the war to back out but he lost his appetite for combined operations in the south. Instead he turned his attentions to Picardy and his target for the campaign of 1513

became the city and fortress of Tournai. Whether his suspicious relationship with Ferdinand had any affect upon his marriage is hard to tell. According to rumours picked up by Don Luis Caroz, now the Spanish ambassador in London, Henry was casting lustful eyes upon Anne Hastings and Elizabeth Ratcliffe, two married sisters of the Duke of Buckingham. From the same source we learn that this led to a

furious spat with the Duke and to the dismissal of Elizabeth from the Queen's service. As the lady was a favourite of Catherine's, this in turn led to a domestic quarrel of some ferocity

.16 Caroz, however, was not particularly close to the Court and the Queen kept him at an arms length. She might no longer be offi cially ambassador but no one was going to usurp her position when it came to mediating between her father and her husband.

The rumours probably arose not from any actual infi delity on Henry's part but from his enthusiasm for a kind of charade known as 'courtly love'. This was a game played by bored courtiers wherein a man would chose a 'mistress' from among the available ladies, would bombard her with trivial gifts and amorous verses and profess his undying devotion. She would then respond as the mood took her, with coy encouragement or furious disdain – usually the latter. This game could go through several rounds, and the 'winners' were those who kept up the pretence longest and most convincingly – particularly the ones who produced 94

the most elegant verses or songs. Real relationships were not supposed to be in question but, human nature being what it is, they sometimes were. The King himself was much in demand as a partner in such games and, after two or three years of playing exclusively with his wife, had probably decided to broaden his fi eld a little. Beyond the inevitable tiffs and sulks, there is no reason to suppose at this stage that his relationship with Catherine was under any sort of real stress. When he went campaigning in France in June 1513 he named her as Governor of the Realm and Captain General in his absence. This was supposed to be a largely honorifi c position and there is plenty of evidence that the King's council continued to govern from his camp, wherever that might be, but it turned out to be rather more real than either of them had anticipated. On 11 August a Scottish herald turned up at Henry's camp and issued a formal declaration of war.

17 In spite of being married to the King's sister, James IV was unable to resist the temptation to resurrect the 'auld alliance' and to seize an opportunity while Henry was distracted. This turned out to be a big mistake because Catherine, with exemplary speed and effi ciency, raised an army and despatched it north under the command of the Earl of Surrey. More than that, she also raised a back-up force, which she commanded in person. On 9 September Surrey annihilated the Scots at Flodden, and James fell on the fi eld of battle. When the news reached Catherine as she advanced to Leicester, she disbanded her army and went home – as well she might. When Henry took fi rst Therouanne and then Tournai, and won the somewhat notional battle of the Spurs, he sent his trophies home to his Queen but she already had the bloodstained coat that James had worn at Flodden. There is an unsubstantiated report from James Banisius, an Imperial agent in London, that Catherine was in an advanced state of pregnancy at the time of the Scottish invasion and gave birth soon after to a live son, who lived for a few days. However, there is no conclusive proof of this, which would have been surprising had it been a fact, and her personal command of the reserve army suggests that she was in no such condition.

There is more than a suggestion that the Queen sided with her husband when his relations with her father became strained, and her communications with the latter became perfunctory. When Ferdinand

contracted out of the Holy League in February 1514, they virtually ceased. This time Henry had every right to feel betrayed, but the rumours that he was thinking of taking this resentment out on his wife by divorcing her appear to be later rationalizations. Caroz complained that Catherine was forgetting Spain in order to court the favour of the English and this time he seems to have been right. By September 1514 she was pregnant again and this time her condition is suffi ciently authenticated, because in January 1515 she was delivered of a stillborn son ‘of eight months’. There was grief and

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lamentation – not as sharp as in 1511, but just as heartfelt. Time was no longer on the Queen's side. She was 30 and beginning to run to fat. Her physical beauty was fading, she had endured three, or possibly four pregnancies and still there was no child. At the same time, her role as a 'pillow councillor' was diminishing. For several years after his accession, Henry had continued to rely on his father's councillors, but by 1514 he had a man of his own. That man was Thomas Wolsey, originally his father's chaplain, whom he had appointed almoner a few months after his accession. This in itself was not a great promotion but it did give opportunities for contact with the King, which Wolsey was quick to exploit. In 1511 he was entrusted with the logistics of Lord Darcy's abortive mission and its failure was no refl ection on his effi ciency. He became a member of the Council, again not a matter of great signifi cance but a sign of growing confi dence. Then in 1512 he managed, not only Dorset's campaign but also the more successful naval operations that took place around Br

est.18 In February 1514 he became Bishop of Lincoln and in September was translated to York. Finally, in December 1515, he succeeded Warham as Chancellor. By 1515 Wolsey was unquestionably the King's chief minister and adviser and in the process put the Queen's nose badly out of joint. Although there was a reconciliation between Henry and Ferdinand early in 1515, Catherine did not recover her mediating position and her political infl uence dwindled. Her connections with Spain also became more tenuous in other ways. Her Spanish confessor, Fray Diego, was notoriously indiscreet and by the end of 1515 had been compelled to go home. At the same time the last of Catherine's devoted band of Spanish ladies, Maria de Salinas, left her to become Lady Willoughby. She still had Spanish servants but they no longer had their former intimacy. Then in January 1516, her father died, and her relations with her 16-year-old nephew, Charles, who succeeded him, were for the time being distant. There are no signs that the Queen was particularly distressed by these changes. Apart from a passing qualm just before Henry VII's death, she had never expressed any desire to return to Spain and was fully committed to her husband's realm.

In the autumn of 1515, she was again pregnant, and in February 1516

– at long last – was delivered of a healthy child. The rejoicings were genuine but muted, for the child was a girl. A fi t piece to play on the diplomatic chess board but not a suitable heir. Henry was determinedly upbeat, ‘by God’s grace’ he is alleged to have said, ‘the sons will follow’. We do not know Catherine’s r

eaction.19 No doubt she was relieved to have done at least part of her primary duty but she knew better than her husband that her time was now getting short. It was not so much her age that was a problem but physical wear and tear. Henry did not give up and there is no suggestion that his pastimes kept him from her bed but it was early 96

in 1518 before she conceived again. On 9 November she was delivered of a still born girl. The old curse had struck again and although the King persevered, at least fi tfully, for another four or fi ve years, Catherine did not conceive again. She was only 33 and probably did not reach the menopause for another six or seven years but she was worn out and her childbearing years were over. Meanwhile, Henry had at last taken a genuine mistress. Just when he started taking a serious interest in Elizabeth Blount is not certain and it is possible that the King was not sure himself. Bessy had been born in about 1500, and on the payroll of the court from 1512. She was a pretty and vivacious blond, not over blessed with brains but accomplished in the courtly arts. It is quite probable that Henry started playing courtly love with her at some time during 1516. By 1518 they were sharing a bed and late in 1518, ironically at about the same time that Catherine had her last still birth, she was found to be pregnant. At some unknown date in 1519, she was delivered of a healthy son, who was immediately acknowledged and named Henry Fitzroy. Thomas Wolsey, by now Cardinal, stood as his godfather. The birth of young Henry affected Catherine profoundly. In the fi rst place it was incontrovertible proof that she was at least sharing her husband's affections with another woman. This was a situation with which Elizabeth Woodville had become very familiar but not any of the other queens we have been considering, as far as we know. More importantly, it appeared to demonstrate that her gynaecological misfortunes were her own fault. It was in any case conventional wisdom to blame the woman for still births and miscarriages but this demonstrated that, with another woman, Henry was perfectly capable of getting a healthy son. The agonizing implications of this hit the Queen hard, and may well have actually inhibited any further conception on her part. She increased her religious devotions, searching for some way of appeasing a God who was only too obviously displeased with her.

Like every other queen, she had been given a jointure on her marriage: lands to the value of about £3,000, which, if not generous by the standards of the recent past, at least gave her considerable freedom of action. Just how much of this was dispensed by her almoner or the stewards of her various manors in the form of charity we do not know but it was enough to gain her the reputation of a

Lady Bountiful. This was not a social policy, or a hint to her husband that he had better do something about poor relief. It was a Christian duty and combined with the fact that she was a member of the Franciscan tertiaries, and was alleged to wear a hair shirt under her royal robes, served to give her a reputation for exemplary piety. In other words, Catherine began to be cast as a female role model and, although this was to become profoundly irritating to Henry in due course, it had its advantages. She was an ideal intermediary for all sorts of petitions,

particularly from humble clergy and widows and orphans and, although she almost certainly did intercede for the Evil May Day rioters in 1517, it was a part carefully choreographed for her by Wolsey, even to the kneeling posture and the unbound hair

.20 All this was woman's work, as her contemporaries noted with satisfaction – just as the Virgin Mary in heaven, so Queen Catherine in England. As 1520 came and went, and the Queen began to approach her fortieth birthday, she was compensating as hard as she possibly could for failing in her primary duty. There was not, and probably would not now be, a male heir. Henry was not rushing his fences, but he had to consider his options. His older sister, Margaret, had married in Scotland and was Queen Mother to the young King, James V. The fact that she was married a second time (to the Earl of Angus) and had produced a daughter was a mere distraction. James was an alien born and the king of a foreign realm. Could he be considered as the heir of England? His younger sister, Mary, betrothed as a child to the Archduke Charles, had eventually been traded for peace with France and had married the ageing Louis XII in 1514. She had, it was alleged, danced him to death in a few months and then, being a wilful wench, had forced herself on the (more or less willing) Duke of Suffolk, sent to bring her home. It was just as well that Louis had been too debilitated to leave her pregnant, because there could have been doubts about the paternity of any child born within a reasonable time after her marriage to Brandon. As it was, they had later produced only daughters, who did not count in this context. The real issue in the early 1520s concerned Henry's own daughter, Mary, and her bastard half brother. Fitzroy would only have been a factor if he could have been legitimated and there was no prospect of that. The only recognized method of legitimating bastards was if the parents subsequently married and that was ruled out. Not only had the King's relationship with Elizabeth Blount come to an end, perhaps even before the child was born, but by 1522, having withdrawn from the Court, she was married to Gilbert Tailboys, son and heir of Lord Tailboys of Kyme. The King may have toyed with the idea of getting some kind of special dispensation from the Pope but it was not pursued. His main attention focused on Mary. A daughter's main use,

as we have seen in other connections, was as a matrimonial bait, and Mary was fi rst used in that way when Wolsey was angling for the treaty of universal peace, which is known as the treaty of London in 1518. After Louis death, the 1514 treaty with France had rather fallen apart. His cousin and successor, Francis of Angouleme, was not particularly hostile but he was too like Henry, both in age and ambition, for their relations to be easy. Given that the King of Spain was the 18-year-old Charles of Ghent, who was having problems establishing himself in the south, the possibility of settling international relations for some time to come seemed to be too good to miss. By taking the initiative in 98

these negotiations, Wolsey obviously hoped to please the Pope (who was always on the look out for peace settlements) but also to enhance his master's and his own prestige. Part of the bait was a marriage between the 2-year-old Mary, and Francis's even younger son, the Dauphin and, when the treaty was completed, that was one of the agreements. There could have been no more complete demonstration of the eclipse of Catherine's political infl uence than the betrothal of her cherished only child in France, a country that she had devoted most of her life to opposing.

She dutifully accompanied Henry to the Field of Cloth of Gold in 1520, but appears to have played a purely passive role in those festivities. However, she may have been gratifi ed to notice that, far from sealing any friendship with the King of France, this meeting rather encouraged their rivalry. Within a few months Henry had abandoned Wolsey's balancing act, and gone back to the Imperial alliance which had been embodied in the Holy League.

21 One reason for this may have been suspicion of Francis but mainly it was a consequence of the death of the Emperor Maximilian in 1519. The Holy Roman Empire was elective and three candidates entered the fi eld – Charles of Spain, Francis of France, and Henry himself. Nobody (except Henry) took the latter's chances seriously at all and Charles had both hereditary infl uence and the Fuggers on his side, so he was duly elected. 22 This new alignment spelled the end for the optimistic treaty of London because France now had Habsburg territory on its three main landward frontiers, which meant that a renewal of the wars in northern Italy was almost certain – and Henry was in the strategic position of controlling the 'fourth front' – the Channel. If the King of England had really been keen on maintaining the balance of power he would have sided with France at this point but Henry was only interested in securing the maximum advantage for himself. So, partly to maintain good relations with the Low Countries (where Antwerp was London's main trading partner), and partly hoping again to grab a bit of northern France, he sided with the Emperor. Charles visited England in 1521 and signed a new treaty of alliance, plainly aimed against France. He also met his aunt for the fi rst time, and allowed himself to be betrothed to his host's 5-year-old daughter. The little girl danced for his pleasure and remembered their

brief encounter for the rest of her life. Whether this about turn in English policy owed anything to Catherine's infl uence is not clear but probably not. Henry had suffi cient reasons for his action and no particular need to gratify his Queen. However, she was certainly pleased by the turn of events and would very much sooner have had her own nephew as a prospective son-in-law than the Dauphin of France. It is probable that no one took the betrothal very seriously, because it was unlikely that the 21-year-old Emperor would wait for his child bride to

grow up but it was a recognized way of sealing an alliance. More importantly, Catherine established a friendly relationship with Charles, which was to prove of great signifi cance when the hostile winds began to blow. Meanwhile, the King had taken another mistress. This time no marital pregnancy provided an excuse for infi delity, but Catherine in her late thirties was no longer the pretty girl he had married. 'Rather ugly than otherwise' sniffed the Venetian ambassador and no longer an exciting partner to a husband seven years her junior. Mary Boleyn was the daughter of Sir Thomas, an experienced courtier and diplomat, who had succeed in infi ltrating his elder daughter into the entourage that had accompanied the King's sister Mary to France in 1514. On Mary's return (as Duchess of Suffolk), her servant had remained at court. Mary Boleyn appears to have been physically attractive, but rather bland as a person. She replaced Elizabeth Blount in the King's bed at some time in 1519 or 1520, a relationship that again grew out of the cavortings of courtly love. In 1521 she was married to William Carey, a gentleman of the Privy Chamber, presumably as a precaution, but seems not to have slept with him until the King had fi nished with her. She did not become pregnant by Henry but immediately conceived as soon as she began cohabiting with her husband, which suggests that the King was no longer as potent as he had been in the early days of his marriage, because it was never suggested that there was anything platonic about his relationship with Mary. Catherine must have known about all this but she held her tongue as a dutiful royal wife was bound to do and concentrated on the education of their child, and her manifold pieties.

The year 1525 was eventful. Henry's attempt to wage war against France had stuttered badly in 1523, and relations with his ally the Emperor had become increasingly strained. Consequently when, early in 1525, Charles won a great victory over Francis at Pavia, and captured him, he treated Henry's plans for the exploitation of his victory with disdain. If the King of England wanted a piece of France, let him earn it for himself. Henry, hamstrung by the failure of Wolsey's attempt to raise more money through the so called Amicable Grant in the spring of 1525, decided instead to settle with the French, and did so at the treaty of the More in August.

23 This effectively spelt the end of the Imperial alliance and the end of Mary's betrothal to Charles. He married the more suitably aged Isabella of Portugal in 1526. Meanwhile, Henry had the succession very much on his mind. He had by this time given up on Catherine and accepted the fact that she would never bear him the legitimate son that he so desperately needed. On 18 June he created his bastard son Duke of Richmond and the choice of this royal title may have been signifi cant. He probably was not seriously considering trying to legitimate him but was rather sending out a signal that his options were still open. 100

The following month Princess Mary was sent off to the Marches of Wales with a lavish entourage, but was not given the formal title that would have acknowledged her right to succ

eed.24 If we exclude the possibility of legitimating Henry Fitzroy, the King had only three options. The fi rst was simply to acknowledge Mary as his heir and try to make sure that she eventually married someone who would be acceptable as King Consort. Given the general aversion of the English to the prospect of foreign rule this would not be easy. The second was a variation, whereby Mary would be married as quickly as possible in the hope that she would bear a son to whom the Crown could pass direct. This was to gamble not only on the King's longevity but also on Mary's acquiescence in allowing herself to be so passed over. The third option was to repudiate Catherine and start again. At some time during 1525, Henry decided to go for the third option. For the time being, nothing happened. Catherine fretted about her daughter's health and about her Latin, engaging her countryman Juan Luis Vives to write two works for her instruction, *De Institutione Foeminae Christianae* in 1523 and *De Ratione Studia Puerilis* in 1524. When she went to Wales she was accompanied by Dr Richard Featherstone as schoolmaster and the most elaborate instructions for her life and deportment were drawn up under Catherine's eye. 25 It is quite possible that Henry's decision to send his daughter so far away at the age of nine had something to do with lessening her mother's infl uence but if that was his thinking it did not work. The King, meanwhile, was coming to a resolution of his problem. There had been doubts about the lawfulness of his marriage before it had ever happened, hence the dispensation, but in his enthusiasm at the time, Henry had simply swept them aside. Perhaps he had been wrong to do so. Henry was Bible learned and knew that the Book of Leviticus prohibited a man from marrying his brother's wife, and pronounced that the couple would be childless. Perhaps that was the Law of God, and could not be dispensed? He became convinced. The facts that he had married his brother's widow, not his wife, and that he and Catherine were not childless were eased away by linguistic scholarship. The Hebrew had really said 'they shall be without sons', which fi tted his situation exactly. 26 By the end of 1526 Henry had convinced himself that his marriage had broken a Divine Law and that he was being punished. It was no true marriage and the woman with

whom he had slept for six or seven years and who had endured half a dozen pregnancies at his hands was not really his wife. Catherine seems to have been quite unaware of these thought processes but she was also becoming a liability for more than strictly dynastic reasons. Henry had fallen out with the Emperor to the extent of being theoretically at war with him and Catherine symbolized, even if she no longer represented, the Imperial alliance. Towards the end of 1526 the Imperial ambassador Mendoza wrote that

THE QUEEN AS FOREIGN ALLY

‘the principal cause of [her] misfortune is that she identifi es herself entirely with the Emperor’s interests …’ and early in 1527 he repeated the sentiment,

‘she will do her best to restore the old alliance between Spain and England, but though her will is good, her means are small …’ Small indeed; but by 1527

there was more than one reason why Catherine had become an embarrassment. Later there were many stories about how the King’s marriage fi rst came to be called in question. It was alleged (by Catherine, who could not stand him) that Wolsey had planted the seeds of doubt. Another candidate (according to George Cavendish) was the Bishop of Tarbes, who was sent by Francis I to negotiate a possible marriage between Mary and the Duc d’Orleans; but he did not arrive until April, by which time the fi rst moves had already been planned.

27 There is little doubt that the ‘scruple’ came from the King himself or that it antedated any serious involvement with Anne Boleyn, Mary’s sister, whom Henry was pursuing by the later part of 1527.

The chronology of that affair has been much debated, largely because there were always rumours fl ying around the court that Henry was ‘enamoured’ of this or that unnamed damsel and it is diffi cult to know when these stories begin to focus on Anne. Probably a standard courtly fl irtation began to become serious at some time during 1526. By the end of that year the King had almost certainly propositioned her and been rejected. Anne was, by all accounts, no great beauty, but she had been trained at Mechelen at the court of Margaret of Austria and was accomplished in all the wiles of seduction. These were probably second nature to her and it came as something of a surprise when the King was snared. In the light of what happened subsequently her reaction looks calculated but it was probably no such thing at the time. Henry, however, was not inclined to give up, and the sudden weakening of Catherine’s position in the summer of 1527 created a new and exciting possibility.

Proceedings commenced with a secret court convened by Wolsey at Westminster, wherein the King was charged with having co-habited for 18 years with a woman who was not his wife. Several sessions were held in the latter part of May, but no conclusion was reached. Henry then, overcome by his conscience (or possibly by desire for Anne), took matters into his own hands, and on 22 June confronted Catherine with the news that they were not, and never had been, married. The Queen appears to have had no inkling of what was afoot and was totally astound

ed.28 Not only had she never entertained a moment's doubt about the lawfulness of her marriage but she was, as we have seen, quite convinced that God had decreed it. Her reaction was highly emotional but also extremely pragmatic. Realizing that her husband would have to resort to Rome for a decision, she immediately despatched her steward, a Spaniard named Francisco Felipez, with a message to

her nephew the Emperor in Valladolid, warning him what was afoot and soliciting his immediate aid. Charles, goaded by this insult to his family honour, reacted immediately. He wrote to Catherine, pledging his full support, to Henry, begging him to desist from so dishonourable a course, and to the Pope to forestall any resulting proceedings in the Curia. Clement, meanwhile, had been terrorized and imprisoned by a mutinous army operating under the Emperor's banner, but without his knowledge, who in May 1527 had sacked the Imperial City and confi ned the Pope to the Castel de St Angelo. By the time that Charles's message arrived the siege had been lifted but Clement was in no position to refuse any request that the Emperor might make, irrespective of its justice. Henry had therefore lost his case in the one place where it mattered, even before it had begun.

29

Thereafter it was a case of irresistible force and immoveable matter, because the belligerent positions taken up in the summer of 1527 did not change signifi cantly for the next fi ve-and-a-half years. It used to be argued that Henry's position was purely selfi sh, whereas Catherine's was one of principle – 'the king wanted to change his woman' as Robert Bolt put it, paraphrasing some contemporary opinions. However, in terms of moral altitude, there was nothing to chose between them. By the autumn of that year the King knew that he wanted Anne Boleyn – no doubt for personal gratifi cation but also because the country needed a legitimate male heir. It is usually believed that Anne held out on him, demanding marriage as the price of complaisance, but that is not necessarily what happened. He could have taken her by force without risk of serious consequences and she must have known that. On the other hand, another bastard would be no use to him. He needed a son born in recognized wedlock and that could not happen unless or until he managed to get rid of Catherine. So it is more likely that he was the one holding back from intercourse. The Queen, on the other hand, knew perfectly well that she would never be able to give Henry the son that he needed. She seems to have believed, perhaps from the example of her own mother, that there was no reason why a woman should not rule a kingdom but that was to fl y in the face of English opinion, which was not reconciled to such an eventuality. Moreover there was a possibility of escape, which perhaps

a loving and dutiful wife should have grasped. If she had taken the veil, her marriage would automatically have been dissolved without impugning either its original legitimacy or the status of their daughter. This option was offered to her on at least two occasions and rejected with scorn. However, given the circumstances and her almost obsessive piety, it was a perfectly reasonable suggestion to make. Two factors contributed to the actual impasse. The fi rst was Henry's incredible clumsiness. Had he approached her gently, explaining the problem (if it needed explaining) and appealed to her good nature or sense of duty, she might have

agreed to withdraw gracefully. She would, after all, have had relatively little to lose and quite a lot to gain. However, that did not happen and his method of broaching the matter aroused all her fighting instincts. The second was the fact that Catherine came to realize that she had been supplanted in her husband's affections by one of her own women – and a mere gentlewoman into the bargain. Once she had grasped this fact, it is not surprising that surrender was not an option. Both Henry and Catherine were being selfish – and very human – but the one incontrovertible fact is that Henry needed a lawful son and in that respect the interests of the kingdom were at stake.

At first it seems that no one understood the full nature of the King's intentions. Wolsey was still thinking of a French princess to replace Catherine while he dealt with Henry's scruple. When he discovered the truth in 1528, he was not happy but had no option but to continue pressing the King's case at Rome. He got nowhere, and nor did the numerous special missions that Henry sent between 1527 and 1532. Clement shifted and prevaricated but would not budge. This intransigence had two main causes. One was obviously the political pressure of the Emperor, but the other was his extreme reluctance to admit that Julius II's dispensation might have been

ultra vires, in pretending to dispense with a Divine Law which was not amenable to such treatment. 30 Henry's case was not strong in canon law, and would have needed skill and good luck to have prevailed, but it was much better than it was made to appear, both at the time and since. The nearest the King came to success was the Legatine Court, which assembled at Blackfriars in July 1529, but that was little better than a sham. Catherine duly appeared and (as had no doubt been expected) immediately appealed her cause to Rome. The Court was adjourned and the appeal stood. By this time the Queen had very strong support. In England Bishop John Fisher led a powerful legal and canonical team, which conducted her defence, and she enjoyed the strong (if surreptitious) backing of all those aristocratic families who hated and feared the rise of the Boleyns. Her image as a 'wronged woman' appealed to other women up and down the land. Abroad, her nephew continued to promote her cause in Rome and his newly

arrived ambassador in England, Eustace Chapuys, immediately constituted himself as her prime champion and protector. Henry only tolerated his blatant interference because he had no desire to sever diplomatic relations with the Emperor, being uncertain of the friendship of the French. Wolsey fell from favour in the autumn of 1529, having failed to give the King what he both wanted and needed. He died in November 1530 facing charges of treason but his disappearance did nothing to resolve what was by that time known as 'the King's great matter'. Meanwhile, Catherine remained at Court, in a kind of *ménage a trois* with Anne Boleyn, discharging her formal duties 104

and still recognized as Queen, but clearly out of the King's bed and favour. Finally, in an attempt to break the deadlock and perhaps in an effort to stave off the radical action that he was then contemplating, on 31 July 1531 the King caused a delegation of about 30 councillors and peers to wait upon the Queen at Greenwich and plead with her in the name of the King and kingdom. They were wasting their time and breath. Catherine merely reaffi rmed her position and her willingness to abide by the papal decision, which she knew perfectly well would be in her favour. Exasperated, Henry left the court, taking Anne with him, and a few days later, on 14 August, went to Woodstock, ordering the Queen to remain at Windsor. With a kind of heroic innocence, Catherine complained that this was no way for Henry to treat his wife, whereupon he exploded with wrath, declaring that he would receive no more messages from her – and never wished to see her again. That was the end of the

ménage a trois, and also of any talk of a reconciliation. Anne had, in a sense, seen off her rival, but legally nothing had changed. Whether he chose to acknowledge the fact or not, he was still married to Catherine, and Anne had, and could have, no status.

Over the previous two years Henry had tried numerous ways to extract a favourable decision from Rome. He had tried browbeating his own Church with charges of praemunire; he had tried claiming that papal jurisdiction did not extend to matrimony; he had tried pleading the ancient rights of England. Nothing worked, and all that he achieved was the interminable delay in the delivery of the papal sentence, which was driving Catherine and her supporters mad.

31 After the summer of 1531, the emphasis changed. Catherine now kept her own court, separate from that of the King, Chapuys visited her regularly and she became increasingly a focus for opposition, not only to the Boleyn ascendancy but also to the King. By the Christmas of 1531 the political nation was becoming increasingly divided and Henry rejected Catherine's proffered New Year gift. The King later alleged that his strong-minded wife could have raised a rebellion against him, such was her support, and waged a war 'as fi erce as any her mother Isabella had waged in Spain'.32 That may or may not have been true but the Queen had no such intention. Her sole purpose was to force Henry to drop his annulment petition. The King was now on

his metal and by the beginning of 1532 had become convinced (or had convinced himself) that the Pope was claiming jurisdiction to which he had no right. In other words that the papacy was merely a human institution that was usurping upon the authority of kings. Although he would never have admitted it, this was dangerously close to the heretical position taken up by Martin Luther and his followers a few years earlier. By March 1532 his new chief adviser, the self-taught lawyer Thomas Cromwell, had worked out a way to turn this conviction into law by using the ancient and

reputable instrument of Parliament. Taking advantage of anti-clerical sentiment in the House of Commons stimulated by a row over mortuary fees, on 18 March he introduced into the House 'A supplication against the Ordinaries'. Catherine's defences remained impregnable, but she was now being outfl anked. By the autumn of 1532 the King had determined to ignore the Pope and seek a solution using the legislative resources available within England. In August Archbishop Warham died and he had the opportunity to appoint a new prelate who would co-operate in his scheme. Meanwhile he created Anne Marquis of Pembroke and took her off to France to meet Francis, whose friendship, or at least acquiescence, was essential now he was set on a course that was bound to leave the Emperor even more alienated. The French king tactfully avoided meeting Anne but in other respects was supportive because his quarrels with the Emperor were never ending. At some time during their stay in Calais, Henry and Anne at last slept together. In January 1533 the amenable Thomas Cranmer became the new Archbishop of Canterbury and Anne was discovered to be pregnant. The climax swiftly followed. Henry and Anne were secretly married and Cranmer's court at Dunstable declared his fi rst marriage null and void. Catherine, of course, refused to recognize either the court or its decision, but her position was now extremely precarious.

33 On the basis of Cranmer's decision, Henry declared that she was no longer Queen, but Dowager Princess of Wales and that their daughter, Mary, was illegitimate. Neither woman (Mary was by now 17) would accept this judgement, which was embodied in a proclamation issued on 5 July.34 A proclamation was not a law and the penalty decreed for disobedience was as yet only 'extreme displeasure' but it put the Queen's supporters on the spot. Chapuys was full of righteous indignation and her household servants, who had a low political profi le, ignored it. However, her more prominent political sympathizers began to draw in their horns. Offending the King was a risky business and those with careers to consider, like the King's former secretary Stephen Gardiner, changed sides. Catherine was by no means abandoned but by the time that Elizabeth was born in September 1533, her position was becoming increasingly beleaguered. This was,

in a sense, her own choice. The King's proclamation had concluded:

'… nevertheless the King's most gracious pleasure is that the said Lady Catherine shall be well used, obeyed and entreated according to her honour and noble parentage, by the name, style and title of Princess Dowager.'

And he was as good as his word. Although he reduced her establishment in accordance with his own perception of her status, it was still costing him nearly

£3,000 a year – very far from the poverty to which Chapuys complained that she had been reduced.

35 Catherine could simply have accepted the *fait accompli*, which had left her in a kind of honourable retirement or she could have taken

the veil, even at this late stage, or she could have demanded to go back to Spain. Instead she remained obdurate, thus making her own life far more wretched than it need have been and the lives of all her servants and wellwishers extremely diffi cult. Almost the only satisfaction that the autumn of 1533 brought to her and her friends was that Anne's child, for which so much had been sacrifi ced, turned out to be a girl. Henry did not know what to do about her. He moved her from Ampthill in July 1533 to Buckden in Huntingdonshire, a manor of the Bishop of Ely, where she complained of the proximity of the fens. Finally, perhaps in response to these pleas, or perhaps for reasons of his own, in May 1534 he moved her again, this time to Kimbolton, which was smaller than Buckden, but more salubrious. At that time he again reduced her household, but not by very much and she still retained a core of Spanish servants, including her physician and apothecary. Chapuys made an endless nuisance of himself with protests against her dishonourable treatment and more seriously intrigued vigorously with disaffected nobles on her behalf. Cromwell kept a careful eye on his behaviour and probably knew that, whereas Charles was not disposed to curb his activities, he was paying absolutely no heed to his pleas for intervention. Catherine might be his aunt and he had no intention of abandoning her but at the same time he had no intention either of getting embroiled in England's domestic affairs. He would confi ne himself to preventing any reconciliation between Henry and the Pope, who in the autumn of 1533 had ordered the King of England to take his wife back, under pain of excommunication.

36 Only in one respect did Henry behave vindictively towards his ex-wife. He refused to allow any personal contact between Catherine and Mary. Messages, sometime apparently written in Spanish, passed to and fro, borne by trusty messengers, but even when her daughter was ill, the Queen was not allowed to visit her. By 1535 the King was aware that the daughter was potentially more dangerous than the mother. For all her obstinacy, Catherine would never countenance any armed opposition to the King's will –

but Mary was much less experienced and more suggestible. If rebellion was to stir as the King moved defi nitively to end Papal authority in England, it was only too likely that she would become its fi gurehead.

She was just as recalcitrant as Catherine and unless or until he had a legitimate son there would be many who would continue to regard her as his lawful heir. In 1534 Henry's fi rst Succession Act made it high treason to deny Elizabeth's legitimacy, or to affi rm the validity of his fi rst marriage. An oath was imposed on all subjects to that effect but it was not administered to Mary and her mother. The King knew their minds well enough but had no desire t

o cut their heads off.37

Towards the end of 1535 Catherine became ill and in January of the following year she died at Kimbolton, insisting to the last that she was the Queen of England.

THE QUEEN AS FOREIGNALLY

Mary (to her great grief) was not allowed to come to her but her passing was exemplary in its piety and she was laid to rest with all the honours due a Dowager Princess, in Peterborough Cathedral. There were, inevitably, rumours of poison and Catherine had herself apparently feared no less. However, they were only rumours. If Henry had been willing to yield to the temptation to do away with her he would have done so long before. It would appear that the former Queen succumbed to a series of heart attacks. She was 51. Even if we accept the validity of Cranmer's sentence, she had still been accepted as Henry's wife for almost 24

years – far longer than any of her successors. She was a highly intelligent and well-educated woman, who had been in her time a great patron of scholars and the recipient of many dedications. Vives is only the best known example. In her youth she had been not only attractive but light hearted and good humoured. Unfortunately neither her good looks nor her good humour survived advancing years and misfortune. Her strong-mindedness became the most infl exible and self destructive obstinacy and her piety, from being gracious, became obsessive. There is no doubt that in the last years of her life she courted a kind of virtual martyrdom and took a grim satisfaction from the fact that, in 1533, her daughter was similarly affl icted for her sake. For the fi rst ten years of her marriage she had devoted all her considerable infl uence to maintaining the alliance between her husband and her homeland but lost that battle eventually because of her father's death and the rise of Thomas Wolsey. Paradoxically, it was the King's attempts to get rid of her that revived that relationship in a different and even more potent form. Without really intending to be so, she became her nephew's bridgehead into English politics and a pressure point that the Emperor found of great value in his dealings with the King of England. Despite spending more than 35 years in England and enduring both good and bad fortune, Catherine never forgot that she was of the royal blood of Spain. How dare a mere Tudor treat her so disrespectfully!

If Catherine could be dubbed 'the wife who never was', the same title might be applied more realistically to Anne of Cleves. Henry had married Catherine because he wanted her and because she represented

a long-standing alliance that corresponded with his present strategic needs. He married Anne because she represented a short-term solution to a pressing problem. When the problem disappeared, the marriage came down to a question of personal chemistry, which was soon found to be non-existent. The year 1539 was, or appeared to be, a dangerous time for England. The King had declared his independence of the Pope fi ve years before and stood excommunicate, which was standing invitation for any neighbouring prince to attack him in the name of the Churc

h.38 As long as the Emperor and the King of France were at daggers drawn there was small 108

chance of that happening but on 12 January 1539 they came to terms in the Treaty of Toledo and each agreed not to come to any understanding with England without the consent of the other. There was talk of withdrawing their diplomatic representatives and the threat seemed to be real. Henry reacted in three ways. First he ordered musters up and down the country, mobilized his fl eet and commenced a series of fortifi cations along the south co

ast.39 This had the desired, if not intended, effect of uniting the country behind its king. However unhappy some Englishmen might be with the drift of the King's recent policies, they were not prepared to contemplate some foreigner interfering to put things right. Secondly he caused the Act of Six Articles to be passed. This was a reaffi rmation of Catholic orthodoxy on certain key theological issues, particularly the sacrament of the mass. Henry might have repudiated the Pope, dissolved the monasteries and authorized a vernacular Bible, but he had no desire to be thought a heretic and chose this method of distancing himself from the creeping evangelicalism that Cromwell and Cranmer had been promoting over the previous fi ve years. This apparently pulled the rug from under his third objective, which was to seek an alliance with the only European power that seemed reliably anti-papal – the Schmalkaldic League of Germany. Faced with the Treaty of Toledo, England was dangerously isolated and the League appeared to offer the only realistic option. The Leaguers, however, were insistent that Henry subscribe to the Lutheran Augsburg confession before they would enter into any formal agreement and that Henry was determined not to do. The Act of Six Articles reaffi rmed that refusal, and negotiations with the League broke down. Cleves-Julich, however, was not a member of the League. Its Duke was a Catholic of reforming tendencies who was perennially at odds with the Emperor. Cleves-Julich was not a major power but the Duke had his own allies and contacts among the anti-Habsburg German princes. Moreover, he had a sister available for marriage.

Henry had been without a partner since the tragic death of Jane Seymour in October 1537, and a considerable number of options had been considered, including several French princesses before the Treaty of Toledo appeared to cut off that line of advance. For some time his preferred choice had been Christina of Denmark but that lady had

eventually declined the honour, allegedly declaring that she would prefer to keep her head on her shoulders.

40 A negotiation with Cleves had been suggested as early as June 1538, but it was only after the death of the old Duke in February 1539 and the succession of his son William, that offi cial feelers were put out. The original proposal had been for a match between the young Duke and Mary, now back in favour in England, but still illegitimate but this was quickly superseded by a negotiation for the King himself to marry William's unassigned sister, Anne, then aged 24. The summer advanced and the

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Franco-Imperial threat failed to materialize but Thomas Cromwell was keen to see the King wedded again and pressed on with the negotiation. One son was not suffi cient for dynastic security although Edward, Jane Seymour's son, appeared to be a robust child just entering his third year. Hans Holbein was sent across to draw the lady's portrait and his effort (which still survives) was suffi cient to convince the King of Anne's charms. There was some discussion of a possible precontract but that had been disposed of by the end of September and the treaty was fi nally signed on 4 Oct

ober 1539.41 What nobody disclosed, and the English envoys probably did not have the chance to observe, was that Anne was in many respects an extremely unsuitable consort. She was, admittedly, not a Lutheran, and was passably handsome, but she was almost completely uneducated, having been brought up in the domestic seclusion of the family castle. Whereas both Catherine and Anne Boleyn had been sophisticated young ladies, fl uent in several languages and accomplished in the courtly arts, and Jane Seymour had received a respectable renaissance education, Anne was a bumpkin. She spoke no language but German, was ignorant of music and knew only the dances of her native land. For a man whose needs were not only physical but intellectual and who expected his consort to shine at court and to be a patron of the arts she was a disaster waiting to happen.

For his part, Henry was compliant rather than enthusiastic. He professed himself satisfi ed with the arrangements, and prepared to greet his new bride, but this was unknown territory to him. In each of his fi rst three marriages he had known that he wanted the woman concerned, but in this case he had only a portrait to go on and knew that the match was primarily diplomatic. He was hopeful and confi dent that Thomas Cromwell had done his best, but no more. Anne set off on her journey to England – with what trepidation we do not know – at the end of October. She was honourably accompanied but no member of her own family came with her even part of the way. In the light of what happened subsequently it might be that domestic relations at home were not all that cordial and her brother may even have been glad to see the back of her. An unmarried sister of 24 could

be an embarrassment. She came via Calais, the sea route from Antwerp being deemed too hazardous in the winter, and Lord Lisle received her there on 11 December. Bad weather then stayed her journey until 27 December, forcing Henry to keep Christmas on his own. So far, despite her leisurely progress, all seemed well. She made a very good impression on the Lisles. In spite of language diffi culties, she seemed gracious and sweet tempered, and passed her enforced stay in Calais by endeavouring to learn something of the English Court. Finally, on 27 December the wind changed and she was able to make a swift passage to England in one of the splendid ships that the King had 110

sent to escort her. Never having seen an ocean-going ship before she was more than a little awed.

Henry meanwhile, his curiosity at last stimulated, decided on a quixotic gesture. He would intercept her in disguise on her journey through Kent. On 1 January 1540 an anonymous group of English gentlemen invaded the Princess's apartments in the bishop's palace at Rochester, claiming to bear a New Year gift from the King. Anne had not the slightest idea what to do. She spoke no English, or French, and probably feared that she was about to be abducted. Henry, who was one of the group, was profoundly disappointed. He had probably expected the kind of witty improvization that he would have got from Anne Boleyn, or the young Catherine and not this lumpish bewilderment. Realizing his mistake, the King withdrew and returned in his own proper person, with his companions abasing themselves in case any misunderstanding should persist. This time Anne could not fail to realize who he was, and somewhat numbly 'humbled herself '. They embraced and Henry withdrew but the damage had been done. Anne had appeared as a plain and rather stupid young woman, quite unable to rise to the unexpected. Henry returned to Greenwich, observing curtly 'I like her not'

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From this low point it was downhill all the way. Anne was received with formal splendour at Shooter's Hill, presented with magnifi cent jewels and royal robes, and married to the King at Greenwich on Twelfth Night, 6 January, but none of this persuaded Henry to fi nd her acceptable. Since he had fi rst set eyes on her he had not ceased to complain, he was putting his head into a yoke, he had not been 'well handled' by his advisers and so on. A last minute attempt was made to fi nd a loophole in the agreement, but there was none. For the sake of public honesty the marriage had to go ahead, even although the Cleves alliance was by this time irrelevant.

Poor Anne could do nothing right. The Germans were 'beggarly knaves' – she was a heretic who would lead the King astray (which was not true), and she did not look the part. Cromwell did his best to soothe his master's anxieties, and hoped for the best. However (not surprisingly) the wedding night was a fi asco. Anne was so innocent

that she had not the faintest idea what was supposed to happen, and was not at all disconcerted when Henry failed to perform. ‘At this rate’, one of her English ladies observed, ‘it will be a long time before we have a Duke of York’.

43 Henry, typically, blamed his impotence upon her lack of physical attractiveness – her breasts were the wrong shape, and so on. He even doubted that she was a virgin, which in the circumstances was ridiculous. Anne must have been aware of the chill that surrounded her splendour, but seems to have had no inkling of the reason for it. For the time being the public life of the court proceeded without disruption. The King and Queen proceeded by barge from

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Greenwich to Westminster on 4 February, and a thousand rounds of ordnance were fi red from the Tower in greeting. The Queen's household numbered nearly 130 men and women, including a number of German ladies and aristocratic English girls, one of whom was Catherine Howard. In April the parliament confi rmed the Queen's dower lands. Anne was not crowned but that would not have been expected immediately in any case and superfi cially all appeared to be well. However, below the surface, there was furious paddling. Most of this concerns the fall of Thomas Cromwell and need not concern us here, except insofar as one of the charges brought against him was that he had manoeuvred the King into the Cleves marriage against his will, which was plausible but untrue. Henry had known perfectly well what he was doing even if he had come to dislike it. More relevantly, attempts were made to get the King off the hook by resurrecting the matter of Anne's pre-contract, but that proved to be impossible. Finally it was decided to proceed on the grounds of non-consummation, which was undeniable if humiliating. The archbishop's court secretly pronounced on this issue towards the end of June – a decision of which Anne seems to have been completely unaware. On 24 June the Queen went to Richmond, and there, on the following day, she was visited by the King's commissioners who informed her that her marriage to Henry was invalid.

The message was carefully delivered through an interpreter and was received with extraordinary composure. Anne may not have known what non-consummation meant, but she seems to have been hugely relieved at being discharged of a responsibility that she had found to be beyond her. She declared herself to be content with whatever the King might decide and signed her letter of submission 'Anna, daughter of Cleves'. If Anne had decided to fi ght in the manner of Catherine, she could have made life very diffi cult for the King. She could have rejected the verdict of a schismatical ecclesiastical Court and insisted upon her contractual rights but she chose to do none of these things. Instead she accepted a generous settlement of lands worth about £3,000 a year – some three-quarters of her jointure – and decided to stay in England. The Duke her brother may have been chagrined at her rejection but in fact he had lost nothing and it may be signifi cant

that he made no attempt to insist on her return to Cleves. Anne never married but she remained on the fringes of the Court, becoming friendly with both Mary and Elizabeth, although she appears to have been upset by Catherine Parr's evangelical associations. After Henry's death she made a rather half-hearted attempt to have her marriage annulment overturned in order to claim the full jointure of a Queen Dowager but did not persist when Edward's council proved to be unsympathetic. In her later years she turned her household into a kind of miniature Rhenish court and her German servants 112

occasionally caused problems. She had no sympathy with Edward's Protestant regime but (unlike Mary) it treated her with kid gloves. She returned to court at the beginning of Mary's reign, and died after a long illness at Chelsea Manor on 16 July 1557, at the age of 42.

44 As a Queen, Anne had been a non-event, and as a person she seems to have been better known for her good nature and charm than for any particular intelligence, wit, or talent. In the reign of Henry VIII, she was a diplomatic footnote, and is remembered best for her quite spectacular ignorance of matters sexual. The only remarkable thing about her encounter with Henry is that, in spite of his extensive experience with at least half a dozen women, he seems not to have known whether she was a virgin or not.

6

The Domestic Queens: Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour and Catherine Parr

Apart from the brief and disastrous experiment with Anne of Cleves, after 1527 Henry VIII found all his wives in England. They were chosen for different reasons at different stages of his career but each was his own subject and therefore did not have to be bargained for with any neighbouring dynasty. This did not usually correspond with the advice of his Council, which was conventionally inclined to marry the King for diplomatic reasons, but Henry knew his own mind in such matters, and (Anne of Cleves again excepted), always pleased himself. Anne Boleyn was by far the most signifi cant politically because the campaign needed to secure her forced the King into radical ecclesiastical courses and her fall shook the establishment to its foundations. Jane was signifi cant for quite a different reason, because she was the mother of his son, and perhaps the best loved of all his consorts. By the time that he married the second Catherine in 1543, Henry was physically a spent force, and the erstwhile Lady Latimer is best known as the nurse who coped with an increasingly irritable and irascible husband and gave him what little peace his divided and self-interested court could afford.

Anne was born in about 1501, and was the younger daughter of Sir

Thomas Boleyn and his wife Elizabeth Howard, the sister of Thomas Earl of Surrey and subsequently Duke of Norfolk. Sir Thomas was a knight of good lineage and his wife came from one of the best noble houses in England.

1 He was also a diplomat and a courtier of infl uence who, in 1513, managed to secure for his younger daughter a coveted position at the Court of Margaret of Austria, the Regent of the Low Countries. That he chose to give Anne such a training rather than her older sibling Mary is signifi cant. The following year Mary was to accompany the Princess her namesake when the latter was offered to Louis XII on the altar of matrimony, but Anne was clearly the brighter, and considered to be the more teachable. Margaret was choosy about who she would accept and her willingness to receive Anne is similarly a great complement to the child. The language of the court at Mechelen was French, and Margaret was meticulous, both in chaperoning her young charges and in providing them 114

with a sophisticated education. Anne remained in that stimulating environment for over a year, before joining her sister in Paris by 5 November 1514, the date on which Mary was crowned Queen of France. When Louis died, the older Boleyn girl returned, as we have seen, to England, but Anne remained in France, transferring her service to the new queen, Claude, who was a girl not much older than herself. While Mary Boleyn was catching the King's eye and sharing his bed, her younger sister remained in France, acting, it would appear, as an interpreter for the numerous English missions that visited the French Court at this time, including one led by her own father. Queen Claude was of a retiring nature and was almost constantly pregnant, so not very much is known of Anne's exposure to the King's household, which travelled around with him, but she is thought to have met and been infl uenced by the King's sister, Margaret of Angouleme. She attended Queen Claude to the Field of Cloth of Gold in 1520 – which was something of a Boleyn family reunion – and became an accomplished dancer and musician. When eventually in November 1521 Anglo-French relations had deteriorated to such an extent that war was in prospect, Sir Thomas brought his younger daughter home. By then she was 20 and, as one contemporary put it,

'more French than English'. She was also a poised and self-assured courtier – and an accomplished fl irt in the best Gallic tradition.

As might be expected, her marriage had been under discussion in England without reference to her own wishes. Both Wolsey and the Earl of Surrey were keen to marry her to James Butler, who was about three years her junior, as a means of resolving an ongoing dispute between the Butlers and the Boleyns over the Earldom of Ormond. James was living in Wolsey's household at the time, as something between a guest and a hostage, and as late as October 1521 the Cardinal, then in Calais, wrote to the King: 'I shall, at my return to your presence, devise with your Grace how the marriage betwixt him and Sir Thomas Boleyn's daughter may be brought to pass … for the perfecting of which marriage I shall endeavour myself at my return, with all effect.'

The marriage never took place, probably for reasons which had more to do with Irish politics than with anything that happened in England, but it is also possible that someone asked Anne, who proved less than enthusiastic. It seems that for some time after her return to England she was thought of as being betrothed in some sense to James Butler, but no formal engagement was ever made. She was, of course, much sought after but, rather surprisingly, there seem to have been no real negotiations. The story of her entanglement with Lord Henry Percy, the son of the Earl of Northumberland, is both late and problematic. It is told by George Cavendish, who dates it to a time after the King had become seriously interested, which would be some time in 1527. However, the fi fth Earl,

who features prominently in the story, died in May of that year; so it is possible that the events narrated occurred in 1526, or that Cavendish's elderly memory was at fault in some other way. The fact is that for all her obvious allure, she was still available at the age of 25 or 26, when her game of courtly love with Henry started to become real. It looks as though Sir Thomas, already the father of one royal mistress, was well aware of the King's increasingly vulnerable state of mind over his marriage, and was plotting the eventual outcome. However, there is not a shred of evidence that anything so purposeful was going on. When Anne returned to England, it was to a position in the Privy Chamber of the Queen. By the beginning of 1522, Catherine's days of power were long since passed, but for an appointment of this kind her decision would still have been required, so it is reasonable to suppose that she had no idea that she was setting up a rival for herself. However, the appointment did mean that Anne was in regular attendance at the Court, and available to take part in its festivities. The fi rst recorded occasion upon which she did that was when she appeared in the character of Perseverance in the defence of the Chateau Verte on 1 March. This involved elaborate dressing up, and a mimic battle in the best Burgundian tradition. Henry led the assault on the chateau, which symbolized female coyness or reluctance, and (of course) won a great victory, which was symbolized by an elaborate dance.

3 Anne's appearance at this stage of her career was described or recollected later by many writers, who differ according to whether they regarded her with favour or not, but in certain respects they are in agreement. She was no dazzling beauty but had an electrifying sexuality: 'Very eloquent and gracious, and reasonably good looking' one contemporary who knew her well wrote, although he was a priest who would hardly have commented upon her allure. Probably the fairest description comes from a Venetian diplomat who was at the English court at the time: 'Not one of the handsomest women in the world, she is of middling stature, swarthy complexion, long neck, wide mouth, a bosom not much raised, and eyes which are black and beautiful …'4 It was not, however, her appearance that attracted men; in the words of Eric Ives, 'she radiated sex'5, and Henry was not the only male to be captivated. Apart from young Henry Percy, who bitterly rued his father's hostile intervention, Sir Thomas Wyatt

equally found her almost irresistible, and had to be warned off by an infatuated monarch.6

Part of Anne's fascination was her accomplishments. She danced excellently in several different modes, played a number of musical instruments and was an accomplished and witty conversationalist, both in English and French. She was also both feisty and independent – and while both these characteristics attracted the King they may have put off other suitors. If she had been seriously intending to marry during the early 1520s then she had not done very well. Men were

fascinated but wary because they did not necessarily want a woman with her own agenda – at least not as a wife. The King's attentions, therefore, although they may have been unexpected and even unwelcome at fi rst, nevertheless soon created a dazzling possibility that no girl in Anne's position could have resisted. As we have seen, the chronology of this relationship is not straightforward. That Henry bombarded her with passionate love letters and wanted to make her his mistress, and also that she refused, is well attested and can probably be dated to late in 1526. By April 1527 Henry had decided that he wanted to rid himself of Catherine because that is when the fi rst secret meetings to effect that were held, and by August he had decided that he wanted Anne as her replacement. In that month he applied to Rome for a dispensation to marry a woman although she was related to him in the 'fi rst degree of affi nity … from … forbidden wedlock'.

7 Anne was not named, but the consanguinity alluded to was clearly that created by his liaison with her sister. When Wolsey went off to France on 22

June, he knew all about the King's intentions with regards to Catherine but did not know about Anne. So the chances are that Henry applied for his dispensation almost immediately after she had signalled her willingness to be a party to his plan – that is at sometime during July 1527. At that stage neither of them was thinking long term; they expected to be married within a matter of months. What then transpired had nothing to do with Anne. It was the result of Catherine's recalcitrance and of the political support that she enjoyed, both within England and in Rome. At fi rst Henry expected that his good standing with the Pope would guarantee success in what was, after all, not an unprecedented

quest.8 Only gradually did it become clear, both to the King and to Wolsey, that they were beating their heads against a brick wall. Meanwhile, Anne's infl uence grew. She lived most of the year at court, had frequent access to Henry and excited in him a fury of frustration. There was more to Anne, however, than sexual torment; she quickly revealed herself to be a politician of skill and resource. Thomas Wolsey was the fi rst to perceive this. His own favour had

been uncertain since he had taken the blame for the failure of the Amicable Grant in 1525 and it is signifi cant that Henry never discussed Anne's position with his chancellor until it was public knowledge. During 1528 she was becoming an alternative source of encouragement and advice. Wolsey was far too canny to resent this openly, and he played to his strength. Because of his unique position as a minister of the Crown and a prince of the Church, the King was bound to rely on him to untangle the Gordian knots in the Curia. Anne knew this perfectly well, and as delays and diffi culties built up, increasingly looked to him for a solution. She may not have trusted him, or even liked him, but for the time being there seemed to be no realistic alternative. 9

This phase of the royal quest came to a dramatic end in the summer of 1529. The Legatine Court, which Clement had ostensibly conceded, was nothing more than a sham because Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio, the Protector of England, who was the specifi c papal representative, was under secret orders to deliver no verdict. Neither Wolsey (the other Legate) nor the King was aware of this deception, and Henry certainly expected the court to declare in his favour. It duly convened at Blackfriars on 18 June, and on 21 June both Henry and Catherine appeared. The Queen then withdrew on the ground that her case should only be heard in Rome and was declared contumacious. So far so good for the King but that was the limit of his success. Over the next month the Court became bogged down in technicalities, perhaps intentionally, and Wolsey wrote to Clement, urging him to order expedition. Nothing could have been further from Clement's intention. On 13 July he revoked the case to the Rota, and on 27 July (in ignorance of that decision) Campeggio adjourned the court for the vacation.

10 Henry exploded with rage and Wolsey stood directly in the path of his wrath. What was the use of a Cardinal Legate who could not even deliver a routine annulment? On 18

October he was relieved of the Great Seal and rusticated to his diocese. There is no reason to suppose that Anne was in any way responsible for this outcome, despite later stories to the contrary; nevertheless the cardinal's fall left her in a position of unchallenged infl uence. On 8 December her father was created Earl of Wiltshire and Ormond and her brother, now Viscount Rochford and a member of the Privy Chamber, was sent on a mission to Franc

e.11 It is hard to say whether there had been any such thing as a 'Boleyn party' at court before October 1529

but afterwards there certainly was and it was in the ascendant. Politically, therefore, Wolsey's fall was a major breakthrough for Anne, but in terms of her confl ict with Catherine it led her nowhere. Henry's affection seemed genuine enough and was ardently expressed but the previous year, when Anne had been forced to withdraw to Hever by an outbreak of the sweating sickness in her household, he had for a while appeared regularly with his wife. Despite the

ménage a trois that the King had established by the autumn of 1529, the Queen showed no sign of either budging or being budged. From time to time Anne became frustrated and we are told that on one occasion, probably in November of that year, she had lashed out at her royal lover:

Did I not tell you that when you disputed with the Queen, she was sure to have the upper hand? I see that some fi ne morning you will succumb to her reasoning, and that you will cast me off. I have been waiting long and might in the meantime have contracted some advantageous marriage … But alas! Farewell to my time and youth spent to no purpose at all.

12

Rather surprisingly, Henry seems to have found such outbursts stimulating and they certainly did no harm to their relationship but, on the other hand, they solved nothing either. By the beginning of 1530 a new post-Wolsey regime was in place, with Sir Thomas More as Chancellor and the Duke of Norfolk who was Anne's uncle, as President of the Council. When her father had been raised to the peerage his allies, George Hastings and Robert Ratcliffe, had also been created respectively Earls of Huntingdon and Sussex. Between them they dominated the council and, as the French ambassador Jean du Bellay wrote, '… above everyone, Mademoiselle Anne'.

13 Politically, Catherine was now heavily outgunned but unless the Boleyn armament could be brought to bear on its target it would make little difference. So preoccupied had Wolsey and the King been in August 1529

that England was almost left out of the Peace of Cambrai altogether. Some rapid last-minute footwork avoided that, but her interests received no consideration. For the time being, Europe was at peace, which meant that Henry had even less leverage in Rome than before and the King could not afford to indulge in such absent-mindedness in the future. Now that there was no Wolsey to take the blame, or credit, he had to concentrate harder, which was not easy when his matrimonial affairs were in such a terminal mess.

As we have seen, in the summer of 1531 he made a decision of sorts. He broke up the

ménage a trois and dismissed Catherine from the court. This left Anne in sole possession – but possession of what? Her ascendancy depended entirely upon her sexuality and upon Henry's willingness to be impressed by it. She had no kind of legal security at all and the next year must have been a radical test of nerve. In that situation the ultimate victory may not have been won by Anne at all but rather by Thomas Cromwell, who had succeeded in transferring himself from Wolsey's service to the King's and, having quickly assessed the politics of the court, made haste to align himself with the Boleyn party. It was almost certainly Cromwell rather than Anne who fi nally persuaded Henry that he could use the ancient and honourable device of statute law to sever the bond that tied him to his wife. The Act for the

conditional restraint of Annates in 1532 was probably a fi nal attempt at blackmail and, when that did not work, the King decided to pursue his unilateral course anyway, relying on statute to tidy up as he went. On 22 August William Warham died, and on 1 September Anne was created Marquis of Pembroke. In one sense this creation was merely a temporary expedient, designed to give her some offi cial status ahead of Henry's planned meeting with Francis of France in the autumn, but in another sense it was a recognition of her real status. Anne did not sit at the Council Board but she was far more really a councillor than many who did. She was knowledgeable, opinionated, and a leader of men – not just in the obvious way of a woman, but in a real political

sense. She did not eventually meet Francis, who had only one use for women and that did not involve councilling. Moreover he was pressed by his own women to avoid encountering such an exotic creature. She did, however, sleep with the King for the fi rst time, and that was – and was probably intended to be – a way of forcing the issue.

It was the discovery of her pregnancy in January 1533 that necessitated rapid action. The amenable Archdeacon of Taunton, Thomas Cranmer, had already been summoned back from a diplomatic mission in Germany to the see of Canterbury. Cranmer was not the most obvious man for such a promotion but he had already declared himself to be the King's man over his annulment issue with a respectable show of theological conviction, and that was what mattered. He had also spent some time in the Earl of Wiltshire's household and was well known to Anne, although not her servant. The fact that he had secretly married in Germany was at this time known to no one but himself and his wife's family. Although he knew something of Cranmer's antecedents, Clement VII made no diffi culty about confi rming his appointment – perhaps he was anxious to oblige the English king over some matter that was within his power. Cranmer received his temporalities on 19 April and was duly enthroned. By that time Henry and Anne were already married in a private ceremony, probably about 25 January, although we do not know where, by whom the ceremony was conducted, or who the witnesses were.

14 Henry may have been confi dent, both in his new Archbishop and also in the understanding that he had reached with Francis at Calais but he was not prepared to come into the open. Even the sharp-nosed ambassadors in London did not fi nd out what had happened until 12 April. As we have seen, convocation dutifully declared the King's fi rst marriage null and void, and Cranmer, acting in defi ance of the papal ban on any further action in the matter, used his consistory court to pronounce a formal verdict. All this Catherine, Chapuys, and many Englishmen of all degrees rejected with varying degrees of contempt. 15 However, the King's conscience was now satisfi ed, and on Thursday, 29 May a visibly pregnant Anne was paraded from Greenwich to London by barge in preparation for her coronation.

Everything possible was done to make the occasion seem joyful and spontaneous. She was escorted along the river by ‘all the worshipful Crafts and Occupations in their best array, goodly beseen’. The King received her at the Tower, and graciously thanked the citizens for their welcome. Over the next couple of days he made 65 new knights, and on the Saturday she processed through London from the Tower to Westminster, escorted by bishops, noblemen and ‘ladies of honour’. The following day, Whitsunday, 1 June, she was solemnly crowned, and at the banquet that followed, her ‘service’ was led by Henry Bourgchier, Earl of Essex, 120

as Carver. ‘These noblemen’ declared the offi cial observer, ‘did their service in such humble sort and fashion as it was a wonder to see the pain and diligence of them, being such noble personages’.

16 Within a few days, Wynkyn de Worde had published an authorized account for the benefi t of any loyal (or not so loyal) subject who might have missed the show. The whole display was splendidly choreographed and a masterpiece of political showmanship, but it could not entirely disguise the unease and even downright hostility that many people felt. The King’s own sister, the Duchess of Suffolk, boycotted the celebrations, as did his daughter Mary and the Imperial ambassador. Sir Thomas More, who had resigned the Chancellorship when the clergy had capitulated to royal pressure in the previous summer, was also conspicuous by his absence. 17 Catherine had already refused to hand over her jewels to ‘the scandal of Christendom’ but her complaints to her nephew were becoming shrill and his own council advised him that his aunt’s troubles were a private matter, and that Henry’s stance towards himself gave no pretext for action – an opinion that he no doubt received with relief:

… although the king has married the said Anna Bulans he has not proceeded against the Queen by force or violence, and has committed no act against the Emperor which [he]

could allege to be an infraction of the treaty of Cambrai …

18

Catherine had now become a cause but she was not a leader and her supporters were at a loss. They could not complain of evil counsel because the policy was obviously the King’s and they had no desire to depose Henry because there was no plausible alternative. They could (and did) endlessly remonstrate with him and urge him to change his mind, but he could afford to ignore such representations. In July, Catherine was formally deprived of her title and told the delegation of peers that was sent to urge her to submit that she would do no such thing because her conscience took priority over all earthly considerations.

19 That position she was not to change but she had effectively been

shunted into a siding. Anne (and her family) had won, but it remained to be seen what use they could make of their victory. On 7 September she was delivered of a daughter and although this was in a sense a disappointment, the omens were good. She had conceived promptly, had an easy labour and the child was healthy and perfectly formed. The Christening, which took place in the Church of the Observant Friars at Greenwich on 10

September was another political demonstration. Many of Catherine's friends were pressed into services that they would no doubt have preferred to avoid. The Marchioness of Exeter stood Godmother, whereas the Marquis bore the taper; and Lord Hussey helped to carry the canopy. Cranmer was the Godfather and the ceremony was dominated by the Boleyns and the Howards, but no one

was allowed to stand apart from this celebration of the King's new heir. The Parliament, which met early in 1534, duly placed its seal of approval on these proceedings. The submission of the clergy to the royal supremacy was confi rmed; annates and applications for dispensations were no longer to go to Rome and it became high treason to deny the validity of the King's second marriage. A second session, later in the year, fi nally abrogated all papal claims in England.

20

It could be argued that it was Thomas Cromwell rather than Anne who emerged as the victor from these political battles and that the Queen was a mere pretext or catalyst. However, that would be to underestimate her power. Of course her whole position depended upon the establishment of the royal supremacy but it was the King's will that counted in these matters, not Cromwell's, and her opportunities for access were absolutely unique. Anne later acquired the reputation of being an early Protestant, and a patron of reformers such as John Frith and Robert Barnes. John Foxe saw her in that light and so did George Wyatt (Sir Thomas's grandson) who, writing in the 1590s, spoke of the 'thrice excellent Queen Anne Boleyn', whom he saw as a key promoter of the 'blessed splendour of the gospel beginning then to shew her golden lustre upon our world'.

21 She is supposed to have shown Henry a copy of Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man*, which elicited the response that this was a book for all king's to read, and Mathew Parker was one of her chaplains. The 'evangelicals' as they were called, were Henry's natural allies against the Pope, and that was probably the main reason why Anne patronized them. Her position might have been one of conviction but it might equally have been calculated. The fact that she was clearly not a Lutheran suggests that she was matching her religious position carefully to the King's and there is no indication that she was ever reluctant to attend mass or any of the other religious ceremonies in which Henry took part. It must be remembered in this context that despite his break with Rome, the King continued to see himself as an orthodox Catholic prince, so his wife could not have afforded to disturb that conviction. There is no doubt that evangelical

preachers and writers looked to her for promotion and support, or that her infl uence in that direction was effective, but she never stepped outside the parameters that Henry laid down. It was her enemies who tried to claim that she was a heretic.

Chapuys, who never ceased to describe her as ‘the concubine’, also blamed her for the sufferings of the Lady Mary but in that respect, too, he may have exaggerated. Henry had at fi rst been inclined to be indulgent towards his daughter and when Catherine was provided with a diminished but still honourable household as Princess Dowager, he prepared to do the same for Mary. On 1 October 1533 a generous establishment of 162 persons was decreed, headed by her old governess, the Countess of Salisbury. However, when the royal commissioners visited her 122

to receive her formal submission, they were treated to a tirade of dissent, and on 2 October Mary wrote to her father, lecturing him on the error of his ways. Even Chapuys was apprehensive at such an act of defi ance. Yet when Mary's whole establishment was dissolved and she was consigned to a supporting role in the household of the infant Princess Elizabeth, the ambassador was quick to blame 'the concubine'. No doubt Anne was hostile to Mary and may well have urged severity but no such infl uence is required to explain the King's decision. He was very angry – as well he might be. Whenever she got the opportunity, which was usually when Anne was visiting her daughter, Mary went out of her way to be as offensive as possible. The Queen seems to have made several attempts at conciliation but was consistently rebuffed and eventually became angry in her turn. Whether she ever urged Henry to execute her, as Chapuys believed, we do not know. If so, her advice was ignored, because despite her outrageous behaviour, the King continued to be fond of his daughter and in the event she survived to (metaphorically) dance on the Queen's grave.

Anne was by this time about 33 but, unlike Catherine at the same age, had kept both her fi gure and her physical attractiveness. Whereas four or fi ve pregnancies had exhausted the latter's fertility, Anne conceived again within about three or four months of Elizabeth's birth. By February 1534 this was generally known and in April Henry ordered his goldsmith to make an especially elaborate silver cradle for the anticipated prince. Then, during the July progress, and perhaps assisted by the strains of travelling, the Queen miscarried. We know very little about the circumstances, which were deliberately concealed, but she never got as far as a lying in (which would have necessitated withdrawal from the progress) and we do not even know whether the foetus was male or female.

22 What we do know is that Henry was bitterly disappointed, and began to entertain doubts about his second marriage. Could his critics have been right all along? Was God now punishing him again for a similar offence? Anne was put on her mettle because her relationship with her husband was in danger. Chapuys was highly gratifi ed and immediately began spreading rumours that Henry was having an affair with 'another very beautiful maid of honour'. The ambassador was

probably exaggerating a very superfi cial attraction – or perhaps not, the evidence is not clear. What is clear is that Anne reacted badly. Catherine had put up with numerous such fl irtations but Anne's position was different. She had relied for seven years on her feisty sexuality to keep the King in line and up until now she had succeeded. So instead of shrugging off such an affair as an adolescent prank she became shrewish and threw tantrums. On this occasion her reaction seems to have worked because a marriage that was as purely emotional as hers was bound

to be affl icted by such spats, and Henry knew that perfectly well.

23 Child or no

child, he still loved her and did not want to upset her.

Nevertheless, this incident was a sign of a deeper malaise. Despite her intelligence, political shrewdness and considerable intellectual powers – or perhaps because of them – Anne had never learned to be a conventional wife. She did not know how to be meek, submissive or long-suffering. So she continued to hold on to her husband in the same way that she had done during their prolonged courtship – with emotional outbursts and passionate reconciliations. Henry, who was extremely conventional in this respect, was fi rst puzzled and then irritated by this behaviour. Did she not realize that a wife and a mistress were different things and their behaviour was governed by different rules? The fact seems to have been that as long as Catherine was alive and Mary still allowed to bait her, Anne was never able to relax into her role and her lack of a son made the situation worse. It would be an exaggeration to say that their marriage began to deteriorate after the summer of 1534 but it did become more erratic and Henry's sexual performance, which had always been inclined that way, became even more so. It was the summer of 1535 before Anne conceive

d again.24

This situation, and her own peace of mind, was not helped by the fact that she continued to be very unpopular. With the promotion of Catherine's cause now prohibited by law, her friends and supporters built up their whispering campaign against the Queen. Every indignity, real and imagined, which was suffered by the ex-Queen and her daughter, was blamed upon the malice of 'that whore Nan Bullen'

.25 She became the equivalent of the medieval 'evil councillor', the scapegoat for all the King's unpopular actions. When the London Carthusians, John Fisher and Thomas More, were executed in the summer of 1535: 'The people, horrifi ed to see such unprecedented and brutal atrocities, muttered in whispers about these events, and often blamed Queen Anne …'26

These were insinuations that Eustace Chapuys was only too keen to encourage. Chapuys was also alert to the popular implications of Anne's Francophilia. Given her background, and the nature of her position, she was bound to favour a French alliance but anti-French sentiment in England ran deep and particularly in the City of London, which depended for so much of its prosperity on trade with the Low Countries. Unfortunately the Anglo-French friendship was based on nothing stronger than a mutual antipathy to the Emperor, and the only way to strengthen it was by resurrecting the old proposal for a marriage between Mary and the Dauphin. This must have been Henry's own idea, because Anne was mortally offended, and the King's rather clumsy attempt to redeem the situation by offering instead a marriage between Elizabeth and Francis's second son, Henri, was poorly received. It seems that despite all professions of friendship, the French 124

were still reluctant to accept the Princess's legitimacy. The offended Queen contributed notably to a chill, which began to affl ict Anglo-French relations in the summer of 1535, but diplomatically she had nowhere else to go, because any understanding between Henry and the Emperor would have been even worse news from her point of view. Whatever the realities of the situation, the Council continued to regard her as a pro-French adviser with access to the King's ear. And not only to his ear; by November 1535 the Queen was pregnant again and if her relations with Henry were 'on/off ', they had certainly been 'on' during the late summer. It was far too soon to regard Anne as a spent force. At the beginning of 1536, her position again appeared to be strong. Her father was Lord Privy Seal, her brother a nobleman of the Privy Chamber and the Archbishop of Canterbury was her staunch friend. At the same time her enemies had disappeared or had been weakened. The Duchess of Suffolk, one of her most implacable critics, had died in 1533, leaving her husband encumbered with debt, and on 7 January, Catherine died at Kimbolton. If the child that she was carrying should be a son, then her position would be assured for the foreseeable future. However, with hindsight we can see that all was not entirely well. Catherine's death cut both ways. Although it removed any possibility of pressure on the King to take her back, for that very reason it made her successor more vulnerable. If Henry should tire of Anne, he could now start again with a clean sheet. At the same time Thomas Cromwell, the King's powerful secretary and her erstwhile ally, was becoming ambivalent. Catherine's death opened the possibility of a rapprochement with the Emperor, to which Anne was an inconvenient obstacle. As the year advanced, Cromwell became increasingly keen on building bridges to Brussels. Finally the Duke of Norfolk, another erstwhile ally, had drawn back and was keeping a low profi le. Probably he was offended with her patronage of evangelical clergy and scholars. He himself favoured the most conservative interpretation of the royal supremacy, and had no time for Cranmer, Cromwell or Anne, who all seemed to be tarred with the reformist brush. There is no reason at all to suppose that Henry and Anne were on bad terms at the time of Catherine's death. In October 1535 there had been the usual rumours that when pregnancy made his wife unavailable, Henry started turning to other women. There was probably no substance in them, and by the end of the month the royal couple were apparently 'merry' together. In November the Queen was

described by one well placed observer as having more infl uence with the King than Thomas Cromwell, which was praise indeed.

Nevertheless, it seems that Anne's reaction to Catherine's death was a good deal more complex than the King's. He was just relieved, and declared that there was now no more risk of war with the Emperor. She was having a diffi cult pregnancy,

and had become depressed and fretful. It is very unlikely that, as Edward Hall declared, she ‘wore yellow for mourning’. It was also reported later that she was distressed by her husband’s relationship with Jane Seymour, and had bitterly reproached him for it, which is plausible because Jane represented just the kind of threat that she had now most to fear, but it cannot be substantiat

ed.27 What did happen was that Henry had a heavy fall in the hunting fi eld on 24 January, and was left unconscious for two hours. He recovered quickly but was badly shaken. Five days later Anne miscarried of a son. The king, still not fully recovered, was distraught, and is alleged to have given vent to his anguish by abusing his wife. He had been seduced into this marriage; it was null and void and he would take another wife. He had clearly offended God again – was his punishment to have no end? The trouble with this graphic account is that it comes from a suspect source

– it is what the Marquis of Exeter told Chapuys. Exeter was a warm supporter of Mary, and no friend to A

nne.28 It is also unlikely that he would have been close enough to the King to have heard this outburst for himself, so that he was relying on hearsay. Altogether the story is unreliable, and the idea that the King determined at that point to get rid of Anne is not consistent with other evidence. What probably did happen is that there was a quarrel between the King and Queen and that is supported by a story that, many years later, George Wyatt heard from one of Anne’s ladies: ‘Being thus a woman full of sorrows, it was reported that the King came to her, and bewailing and complaining unto her the loss of his boy, some words were heard to break out of the inward feeling of her heart’s dolours, laying the fault upon unkindness …’29 This is equally uncorroborated, but much more plausible. Two thoroughly miserable people having a go at each other because they did not know what else to do.

Whether there was any link between these events at the end of January and Anne’s sudden fall at the end of April is problematic. Many years later Nicholas Saunders repeated a story to the effect that the foetus that Anne miscarried had been deformed in some way and that the King had leapt to the conclusion that he could not have

begotten it. As it was commonly believed at the time that a deformed birth was the result of the sexual misconduct of one or both parties such a story is plausible. On the other hand, there is not a scrap of contemporary evidence that there was anything wrong with the foetus, which died only because it was premature. It was apparently inspected and declared to be male, but nothing else was said at the time. Nevertheless it is reasonable to suppose that such a miscarriage, followed by misery, quarrels and recriminations, would have destabilized a relationship that had had its rocky moments before. What seems to have happened is that these events impinged upon two longer term situations to create a crisis of confi dence upon the King's part. In the fi rst place, Anne 126

seems to have been quite unable to control her fl irtatious instincts or her sharp tongue and, in the second place, Thomas Cromwell decided that she was a serious obstacle in the way of his chosen foreign policy. It was the latter development that was the more important, because complex negotiations were in train at the time to persuade Charles to endorse Henry's repudiation of the papacy in return for a recognition of Mary's legitimacy using the argument of

bona fi de parentum – in other words that Mary was legitimate because at the time of her birth both her parents believed that they were legitimately married. To this Anne was vehemently opposed and, although Chapuys was prepared to change his tactics far enough to be polite to her, he did not succeed in moving her position. In taking this line she was not defending herself, but her daughter Elizabeth, who would automatically lose her right to the succession if Mary should be so recognized. The story is far more complex than this simple outline would suggest but as April advanced Cromwell became increasingly convinced that Anne was standing in his way. Negotiations with the Emperor would be so much easier if this woman, who had been the cause of the Anglo-Imperial breakdown in the fi rst place, could be removed and replaced with a new wife – perhaps Jane Seymour. About 20 April Cromwell changed sides and began to seek for ways to destroy Anne's relationship with the King – and this would not mean divorce, but death.

Within a few days he was consulting with his erstwhile enemies, Mary's supporters, and putting together a sort of dossier consisting of unsubstantiated gossip about Anne's behaviour, and midwives' evidence about the aborted foetus. All this was intended to arouse the King's suspicions, not to be the kind of evidence that could be produced in court. The device seems to have worked. Henry must already have been in a volatile state of mind, but it must also be remembered that he trusted Cromwell to a degree that he would not have trusted anyone else, with the exception of Archbishop Cranmer – who was not a party to any of these intrigues. By the end of April Henry was half convinced that his wife was a scheming whore and then she presented him with what appeared to be tangible evidence. On 30 April she had a furious quarrel with Sir Henry Norris of the Privy Chamber, during which she accused him of seeking her hand in

marriage ‘if aught came to the King but good’. Norris was horrifi ed, as well he might be, by such an irresponsible charge, which he was quite unable to refute except b

y denial.30 The Secretary’s intelligence was good, because the same day his agents picked up one Mark Smeaton, a Privy Chamber musician who seems to have been mooning after the Queen for some time. With the aid of a little privately administered torture, Smeaton was persuaded to admit to an adulterous affair with Anne, which almost certainly existed only in his own imagination. Emboldened by this success, on 2 May, Cromwell ordered the arrest

of Norris, and for good measure, Anne's brother George. George had naturally been on intimate terms with his sister, and there were many occasions that could be misrepresented by a suffi ciently perverted mind. Incest, moreover, was particularly calculated to horrify a king whose sexual morality was nothing if not conventional. On the same day Anne was also arrested and taken to the Tower. So far, so good but, as one of Cromwell's agents put it 'no man will confess anything against her, but all-only Mark of any actual thing'.

31 This, he judged

'should much touch the king's honour if it should no further appear'. In other words, it would do Henry's reputation no good at all to charge his wife upon such fl imsy grounds.

32 Ironically, it was Anne herself who partly solved this dilemma. The shock of imprisonment seems to have unhinged her, and she began to chatter. She did not confess to any actual misdeeds because there were (almost certainly) none to confess, but she did recount a whole string of indiscreet conversations, going back some time, and admitted that she had mocked Henry's occasional fi ts of impotence. All this was promptly relayed to Cromwell, with the result that Sir Francis Weston, Sir Thomas Wyatt and William Brereton, a Groom of the Privy Chamber, were also arrested. With the aid of some forensic imagination and a few perjured witnesses, a detailed and circumstantial list of the Queen's alleged adulteries was built up over the next few days, and on 10 May Weston, Norris, Brereton and Smeaton were all tried at Westminster and convicted by a handpicked jury of Boleyn enemies. The Queen and her brother were tried by their peers two days later but the conviction of their 'accomplices' made the verdict a foregone conclusion. Anne was charged not merely with adultery and incest but with poisoning Catherine, attempting to poison Mary and conspiring to bring about the death of the King. Completely amazed by this catalogue of iniquities, she could only respond, 'If any man accuse me, I can but say "nay" and they can bring no witnesses', which was true but quite unavailing.33 With the King's eye upon them, the peers knew their duty and found both the defendants guilty. Six days later, on 18 May, they both went to the block on Tower Hill. The exact chronology and circumstances of

Anne's fall have been much debated. Was she secretly opposing Cromwell's plan for the dissolution of the monasteries? That might have given him an additional reason for wanting to get rid of her. When did he turn against her? His own claim that he only abandoned the Queen when he saw that the King had decided against her was disingenuous. He was moving against her at least by 24 April. 34 The King's critical role is even more mysterious. He was apparently fully supportive as late as Easter, which was on 16 April, yet by 2 May he had completely changed his mind. The conclusion that he was 'bounced' into a fundamentally irrational decision seems unavoidable. The agent must have been Cromwell, who seems to have seized 128

upon the opportunity created by Henry's genuine perplexity. Anne was awkward, independent and sometimes abrasive; he admired her, loved her and sometimes feared her. Yet she had now miscarried twice and he still had no legitimate son. Was there something sinister in the fascination that had held him in thrall for nearly ten years? Then the magic word, 'witchcraft', was mentioned. Henry had a strong superstitious streak in his make up, mixed up with his rather eclectic intellectualism and erratic emotions. If Anne was a witch, suddenly everything fell into place; her obvious sexuality, her power over him, her failure to bear a son. It was all part of a diabolical conspiracy! Cromwell had no desire to see witchcraft feature among the legal charges. It was too subjective and emotive, and besides it was not within the jurisdiction of the Lord Steward. Fortunately for him, he did not need it. Once the King's mind was made up, there was no shortage of more orthodox charges, no matter how implausible. Both the London commission and the Lord Steward's Court could be persuaded to do the King's bidding –

provided it was clearly known. For whatever reason – and there must remain some doubt about that – in the space of about a week between 24 April and 1

May 1536, Henry became convinced that his bedfellow was a whore and a witch. Of course that meant that she had never been properly his wife. Attainder had already stripped her of her title of Pembroke and on 17 May Cranmer was forced to preside over a special session of his consistory which dissolved her marriage on the grounds of consanguinity – an impediment that had been perfectly well known three years earlier when he had pronounced the marriage valid. Only the King's manic insistence can account for such an unworthy

volte face on the part of a man otherwise known for his integrity.

So Anne went to her execution, abandoned and despised, for no good reason other than that the King would have it so. Her family-based political faction was destroyed overnight and her young daughter left in a limbo of bastardy. As a result of his own quixotic actions, Henry now had three illegitimate children but no heir, either male or female. However, on 19 May, the day after Anne suffered, he was betrothed to Jane Seymour. There was at the time, and has been since, a school of

thought that attributes Henry's vindictive determination to erase Anne to an intense infatuation with this new love. However, that would seem to be an exaggeration. Anne had to die because she was too dangerous to leave alive and that was Cromwell's judgement rather than Henry's. The secretary seized the opportunity created by the King's suggestibility to pile Pelion on Ossa, because he feared her revenge if she were left alive. In a way her death was a tribute to her power. By the beginning of May, Jane was clearly at the top of Henry's agenda, but how long she had been there is another matter. She had been a member of the Queen's privy chamber for some time, and Henry must have known her well

by sight. However in September 1535, when the royal couple visited Wulf Hall, the Seymour residence in Wiltshire, during their summer progress, Jane was probably not even there. The reason for a visit to Sir John Seymour had more to do with the rising career of his elder son, Sir Edward, than with any charms of Jane. Moreover only hindsight links her with Anne's tantrums in January 1536. It may be that the King was becoming seriously interested by then but it cannot be proved. In fact the chronology of their relationship is hazy. At some point, probably in March or early April, the King seems to have propositioned her, to be told fi rmly that 'she had no greater treasure in all the world than her honour, which she would rather die a thousand times than tarnish'. He is also alleged to have sent her a letter and a generous present, both of which were returned with dutiful humility. All this sounds a bit like hindsight and a family plot intended to unseat Queen Anne, but the source of most of it is Chapuys, who was a keen meteorologist when it came to storm signals. It is quite probable that Henry's decision to marry her was as sudden as his decision to abandon Anne, and was conditioned more by her immediate availability and by her father's proven breeding record than by any deeper or longer term considerations. In moving as he did on 19 May, Henry outpaced all the observers. As soon as Anne's fall was known, Pope Paul III, convinced that she had been the sole cause of the King's straying, began to anticipate negotiations to end the schism. The Emperor was similarly speculating about the possibility of a Habsburg marriage to bring Henry back into the mainstream of European diplomacy. Both knew about Jane, but both chose to regard her as a casual 'amour' rather than an intended bride. They were wrong because Henry's needs, both sexual and dynastic, were now urgent and he had no intention of plodding through the endless rounds of negotiation necessary to secure a European bride. Nor had he any intention of re-negotiating his ecclesiastical policy. In that respect the Seymours were neutral, perhaps more conservative than otherwise. Cromwell seems to have favoured Jane as a means of healing the deep divisions in the court that had characterised the Boleyn ascendancy – but he had no hand in prompting his master's decision, and seems to have adopted this attitude only after the

fait accompli. Henry and Jane were married with what can only be described as indecent haste at Whitehall on 30 May. Jane was 27: a

somewhat plain and dumpy virgin if her portraits are anything to go by, although her unmarried status probably had more to do with her hard-up father's inability to provide a suitable dowry than with any lack of attractiveness. Of course, with this dramatic turn in her fortunes no dowry was required.

She was not at all the kind of girl who would have appealed to the young Henry, but he was now 44 and his priorities had changed. What he needed now, 130

apart from a son, was a spot of peace and quiet. Anne had been a challenge in every sense of the word. She had been sexy, edgy and opinionated; a stormy and emotional companion but a shrewd and well-informed adviser. She had had her own supporters, her own networks, even her own policies. Jane was none of these things. What she did have was a good natured and imperturbable common sense. As Henry told Chapuys soon after his marriage, 'her nature was gentle and inclined to peace' – in short, Jane was everything that A

nne had not been.35

When she urged Henry to take his elder daughter into his grace – which must have been within a few weeks of their wedding and before Mary's surrender – the King told her effectively to mind her own business. Anne would have sulked furiously at such a rebuff but Jane took it all in her stride. She probably did not have any share in Mary's submission, which came towards the end of July, but was on hand to make sure that Henry took it in good part and that the younger woman's household was fully and sensitively restored. She was more like an elder sister than a stepmother to Henry's daughter, who was now 21 and the two became fi rm friends. Jane clearly did not have any religious opinions, which grated on Mary's sensitive conscience. Conservatives like the Marquis of Exeter regarded her as a friend but it is an open question whether she had any opinions of her own at all.

In the latter part of 1536, Henry had need of as much domestic peace as he could get. On 18 July his son Henry had died at the age of about 18. He may, or may not, have ever entertained ideas of legitimating him, but he was fond of the boy and felt his loss keenly. Fitzroy's widow, Mary Howard, we are told 'handled herself very discreetly' but she was only 17 and they had never lived together. The young Duke's main legacy, apart from his father's grief, was a large tidying-up operation of people, lands and jobs because he had no direct successor in any of his functions. More importantly, the north of England was swept by rebellion. This had a number of specifi c causes, which have been exhaustively discussed, but the timing seems to have been mainly occasioned by the discovery that Anne's death had made not the slightest difference to the main thrust of the King's policies. She had been cast as the evil infl uence from which all his errors and abuses had stemmed and when she fell her enemies waited

expectantly for everything to change. Mary had been the first to be disillusioned in this respect and she had submitted and come to terms with Thomas Cromwell. The conservative leaders (or some of them), however, now felt that Cromwell had betrayed them and he became the arch-enemy whom the King must be pressed to repudiate. The rebellions, known collectively as the Pilgrimage of Grace, were powerful, but messy and ill directed. Above all the great conservative magnates, the earls of Derby, Shrewsbury and Northumberland, who had been expected to back the

movement, held aloof. The Emperor, who might have felt compelled to support them a year earlier, was now not interested at all. The Pilgrimage collapsed under its own weight with only a few discreet pushes from the King and the Duke of Norfolk. Mary, who might have been its fi gurehead, instead confi rmed her newly established favour by repudiating it absolutely and making it clear to Charles that she was no longer prepared to be used against her father.

36 Jane, whose peacemaking role had certainly played a part in keeping Mary 'on side', had by Christmas become a symbol of the new stability. Henry spoke of her as his fi rst

'true wife', which was legally the case since Parliament had confi rmed Anne's displacement back in July.

The new queen had the immense advantage of carrying almost no political baggage. Unlike Catherine, or even Anne, she had no pretensions to noble birth and no established political persona. The King had made her to suit himself. She even dressed to please him and he made her magnifi cent. She was given the usual consort's jointure and her attendants were chosen with great care. Jane was not fl irtatious but in the light of the recent past it was essential that no breath of scandal should touch her entourage. Jousts and entertainments were provided in her honour and several royal palaces were lavishly refurbished. Altogether there was a sense of new beginnings and Christmas was kept at Greenwich with exceptional splendour in the midst of ferociously cold weather that prevented any movement upon the river. Jane, however, was not crowned. A great ceremony was being discussed, but just before Christmas the Queen's father, Sir John Seymour, died, and that required a fi xed period of mourning. Then in February she was found to be pregnant. That had not inhibited Anne's coronation four years earlier, but there was no comparable point to be made this time and talk of a coronation was quietly dropped. The Queen's health appeared to be good, but nothing must threaten her at this most delicate time. By June, all seemed still to be well but Henry was taking no risks and cancelled his summer progress in order to remain within reach. Quite apart from the fact of conception, the King seems to have been exceptionally solicitous of Jane's welfare and it may be that he was genuinely more fond of her

than of either of her predecessors. Perhaps her straightforward dependence touched him. Here was a woman with no independent resources. He was even concerned to reassure anyone who would listen that it was not she who had asked him to cancel the progress, because ‘she can in all things well content, satisfy and quiet herself with that thing which we shall think expedient.’

37

Throughout the summer the astrologers were predicting the birth of a prince. They knew that that was what the King wanted to hear, and they had a 50 per cent chance of being right – perhaps rather higher, given the number of times they had 132

been wrong in the past. Henry was suffi ciently convinced to have a stall prepared in the Garter Chapel at Windsor for the new Prince of Wales, but again perhaps he was whistling in the dark. Like many women at the time, Jane seems to have been quite uncertain when her time was due. She withdrew into the customary seclusion at Hampton Court in late September, which suggests that she expected to give birth in late October. In fact she went into labour within a fortnight, on 9 October. After an easy pregnancy the birth was bitter and protracted, lasting two days and three nights and leaving Jane exhausted. However, the agony appeared to be worthwhile for the child was a boy, alive and perfect. Henry is said to have wept with emotion, as well he might considering what suffering he had created in the quest for this child. Rejoicings thundered round the country in a way that had not been heard since the ill-omened birth of Prince Henry 27 years before. The new Prince was named Edward, and on 15 October was christened with great splendour in the chapel of the palace where he had been born. The godfathers were the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Duke of Norfolk; the godmother the Lady Mary. No more complete a symbol of reconciliation could be wished for. On 18 October the infant was created Duke of Cornwall and Earl of Chester and on the same day his maternal uncle, Edward Seymour, Viscount Beauchamp, was promoted to the Earldom of Hertford.

Unfortunately, the Queen did not make a good recovery. On the day of the christening she had been well enough to sit in the ante-chapel and receive the congratulations of the guests, but three days later puerperal fever developed; by 23 October she had become delirious and late on the night of the 24 October she died. Henry's dynastic ambitions had claimed one more life, although it would be hard to blame him in this case. Jane had been such a gentle soul, and her passing was bitterly mourned: '… and of none in the Realm was it more heavelier taken than of the King's Majesty himself, whose death caused the king immediately to remove into Westminster, where he mourned and kept himself close and secret a great while …'

His father had mourned likewise in similar circumstances 34 years before. Henry, who had been relieved by the death of his fi rst wife, and gratifi ed by that of the second, was genuinely and deeply distressed by that of the third. She was, he declared, the dearest of

them all and when his own time came he chose to be buried beside her. However, for the time being life went on and he had the son for whom he had longed.

Henry had had little experience as a widower. In fact he had lacked a wife for barely a month out of the previous 28 years. This time, however, he was to remain unwed for over two years, and when he was tempted back into matrimony it was into the disastrous alliance that we have already noticed, with Anne of Cleves.

Physically, Henry was almost spent. Almost, but not quite, and on the rebound from Anne he married Catherine Howard, who was so unusual that she merits a whole chapter to herself. The King emerged from that experience chastened, humiliated, and feeling his age. He was not, however, prepared to admit defeat and as his councillors continually pointed out, one son was not enough to secure the dynasty. Whether he was still capable of begetting a child remains an open question, but in 1543, at the age of 51, he married for the sixth and last time. The statute which had condemned Catherine Howard had made elaborate provisions against any such event being repeated. It was now high treason for anyone to conceal the prenuptial infi delities of any future Queen. Moreover two of Henry's wives had now ended on the block for adultery. There was consequently no rush of candidates. Nor did any courtly family wish to embrace the fate of the Boleyns or the Howards. For about a year after Catherine's fall, the King occupied himself in renewing his alliance with the Emperor, and in provoking the Scots into the invasion that ended so disastrously for them at Solway Moss in November 1542. Henry now had no Thomas Wolsey or Thomas Cromwell to lay potential policies before him, but his experience was vast and he was able to manage quite satisfactorily on his own. He did not, however, like living on his own and although no one was now prepared to take the risk of introducing nubile damsels into his presence, he nevertheless kept an eye open for himself and, early in 1543, he became friendly with another Catherine, the 31-year-old Lady Latimer. Catherine came, like Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour before her, from a major gentry family with marginal links to the peerage. She was the oldest child of Sir Thomas Parr of Kendal in Westmorland, who had made his mark in the early days of Henry's reign as a companion in arms but who had died young in 1517. His widow did not remarry and the details of Catherine's upbringing are obscure. She was highly intelligent, but not notably well educated and it is probable that she stayed in her mother's modest establishment until she married in 1529 at the age of about 17. Her mother, Maude, had retained links with the court and managed to secure for her a match with Edward Borough, the son and heir of Thomas, Lord Borough. This was a good match in every respect save one: Edward's health was poor, and he died in 1532 leaving his widow childless and probably still a virgin. By that time Maude had also died but the family rallied round and in 1533

she had been married for a second time, to Lord Latimer of Snape in Yorkshire. John Neville was a man of about 40, with two grown children by his previous (two) marriages. Catherine was passably good looking and sexually frustrated but she made a good job of being Lady Latimer and ran her husband's great Yorkshire household with fi rmness and competence. The Latimers survived the Pilgrimage of Grace with diffi culty and the experience seems to have ruined 134

John Neville's health. They moved to London in 1537 and Catherine was able to establish (or re-establish) a network of friendships at Court. This seems to have happened through the Seymours, who were riding high at that point. Through Jane she met the Lady Mary, about four years her junior. The Seymour position was not affected by the death of the Queen, and Catherine, whose husband was by this time an invalid, became emotionally involved with Thomas Seymour, Jane's dashing and unscrupulous younger brother. Catherine was wise and discreet and no scandal attached to their friendship, but he was clearly on the look out for a rich widow, which he hoped she would shortly become. By January 1543 Lord Latimer was in a bad way, and it looked as though the couple's wishes were about to be fulfi lled. And then Henry became interested.

Henry was no longer looking for excitement, sexual or otherwise. What he wanted was a calm and sensible companion – someone who could soothe his increasingly violent fi ts of bad temper, ease the pain of his various ailments and quietly do as she was bidden. About 16 February he sent her his fi rst recorded gift and message. On 2 March, Lord Latimer died. Left to her own devices, she would almost certainly have married Thomas Seymour. Several years later she wrote to him, '… as truly as God is God, my mind was fully bent, the other time I was at liberty, to marry you before any man I kno

w …'38 However, the King took precedence, and daunting though it must have been, the prospect of becoming Queen was also attractive. By June 1543 Catherine's presence in the Privy Chamber was suffi ciently conspicuous to attract comment, and on 12 July Henry married her in the Queen's closet at Hampton Court and another gentry family had made it to the top.

Catherine was not a political animal except in one very important sense – she was an evangelical. Quite how this had come about is not clear, but Lady Latimer appears to have become interested in things intellectual after her return to London in 1537. Within two years the court was dividing along religious lines, into evangelicals and conservatives. At fi rst the latter appeared to be carrying all before them. Firstly the Act of Six Articles, then the fall of Thomas Cromwell and fi nally the King's marriage to Catherine Howard appeared to give them an unassailable advantage. The latter, however, turned out to be

a liability and the Howard ascendancy that she brought with her alienated many – including the Seymours. By 1543 the Earl of Hertford and his brother were fi rmly in Archbishop Cranmer's camp and Catherine went with them. The evangelicals, however, were not Protestants and her friendship with Mary was not impeded; in fact it seems very likely that Mary coached her in her belated struggles with Latin and encouraged her to read the Bible. The Queen enjoyed having theological discussions with her much more learned husband, and was not short of opinions,

although always (as she thought) strictly deferential. She wrote and published a book of

Prayers and Meditations in 1545, which was a unique achievement for any of Henry's queens, and in consequence attracted rather more praise and attention from humanist scholars and ecclesiastics than she strictly deserved. Whether she had any hand in selecting the evangelical tutors whom the King appointed for his son Edward is more problematical but those who saw her as gently steering her erratic husband in that direction in the last years of his life were probably not wrong.

Too much should not be made of this. John Foxe later told a long and circumstantial story about how the conservative faction at court, led by Stephen Gardiner the Bishop of Winchester, sought to bring about her downfall by incriminating her in the heresy of Anne Askew. Anne was certainly a heretic (as even Cranmer admitted) and she seems to have had supporters within the Queen's Privy Chamber, but the Queen herself was not touched. The story as told is that Henry had become irritated with his wife for 'lecturing' him on theology and that Gardiner seized the opportunity to persuade the King to draw up articles of accusation against her. A copy of these articles then came 'by chance' into the Queen's possession. In spite of her agitation, she hastened to abase herself before her Lord and Master assuring him that her only desire was to learn from his wisdom. Perfect reconciliation and collapse of hostile party!

39 Whether these events actually occurred or not there is a kind of symbolic truth about the story because the Queen and her allies (notably Sir Anthony Denny, the Groom of the Stool) were clearly in the ascendant at Court in the last months of Henry's life and that accounts for the shape of Edward's regency Council. When the King went to war in France for the last time in 1544, he left Catherine as governor in his absence and although this was little more than a formality, it was also a studied gesture of confi dence as it had been with her predecessor in 1513 – only this time there was no Scottish invasion and the Queen did not have to go to war. 40 There are some indications that she expected to be named as Regent in the King's will but in the event she was completely ignored. When it came to the real

work of government, Henry was not prepared to entrust it to a woman – why else had he moved heaven and earth to beget a male heir?

Despite her reputation among the evangelicals, there was nothing oppressive about Catherine's piety. Although she was a keen reader of improving books, her chief delights were in clothes, music and dancing. She loved animals and fl owers, kept jesters both male and female and generally gave the impression of enjoying the good things of life. Mirth and modesty are the two words most commonly used by contemporaries to describe her and she was a conspicuously successful stepmother to two broods of children, fi rst the Nevilles and then the Tudors. 136

Her friendship with Mary survived the increasing divergence of their religious views and although she saw less of Elizabeth (who was 12 in 1545) and Edward (who was 8), relations appear to have been relaxed and amicable. In the case of the younger children there was no religious tension and Catherine may well have had a hand in appointing their tutors. She was spared the agonizing trauma that affl icted most of Henry's other queens. Although the succession act of 1544

spoke dutifully of any children to be begotten between the King and his present wife, everyone knew that it was not going t

o happen.41 The unfortunate woman was into her third virtually sexless marriage and although nobody was going to tell Henry that, he must have known it perfectly well. The statute confi rmed what everyone knew – that Edward was his heir – but what followed thereafter must have come as a surprise, because if Edward were to die without 'heirs of his body lawfully begotten' the Crown was to pass to Mary and after her on the same terms to Elizabeth, neither of whom was legitimated. This was altogether unprecedented, and an expression of how far the power of statute had advanced, even since the last succession Act.

Catherine was not with Henry when he died. Whether this was by custom, inadvertence or someone's decision is not clear because the King's demise took no one by surprise. She attended his funeral but only as a spectator. As Queen Dowager she was left at the age of 35 with no political role but a substantial jointure and an unassuaged sexual appetite. For the time being the latter dictated events and within weeks she was secretly married to Lord Thomas Seymour, now the brother of the Duke of Somerset, the Lord Protector. Somerset disapproved of their union for a variety of reasons, not least its haste and a furious quarrel developed between the brothers over the jewels that Catherine claimed had been given to her personally by the late king and which the Protector claimed were Crown property. For about 18 months she was Lady Seymour of Sudeley, presiding over a large household, which also included for a while the King's sister Elizabeth. She was soon to discover that there were risks attached to having a real man at last and while she was pregnant in the summer of 1548 she found her husband making passes at Elizabeth, now a precocious

14-year-old. The girl was sent away in disgrace but Seymour himself was above reproach. Having at long last conceived a child, Catherine was brought to bed at Sudeley Castle and, on 30 August 1548, gave birth to a healthy daughter. Six days later she contracted puerperal fever as Jane Seymour had done and died with her erring husband beside her. After Henry's death she had published a second religious work, the

Lamentation of a Sinner, which was unequivocally Protestant. When she was buried in September 1548 it was with the Protestant rite, which would not become legal until the following year. The ceremony was performed by her

almoner, the Protestant scholar and future bishop, Miles Coverdale. Catherine had not enjoyed her hard-earned status as Queen Dowager very long. Indeed, apart from her pregnancy it is likely that she did not enjoy it much at all because every time she appeared at court she had to fi ght a petticoat war with the Duchess of Somerset, as each claimed precedence; and as we have seen, her husband had a roving eye which in due course was to contribute to his downfall. That, however, is not part of Catherine's story; her legacy is to be found in the reign of Elizabeth and the Protestant ascendancy.

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The Queen as Whore: Catherine Howard

Anne Boleyn had been condemned for political reasons on the pretext of adultery because that was what had been necessary to touch a raw nerve in the King's psychology. No such shadow had ever hung over Catherine of Aragon

– indeed if it had done it would have been much easier to get rid of her – or Jane Seymour, or Anne of Cleves, although Henry found her displeasing for several reasons. Catherine Howard was an altogether different proposition. According to the author of the only full study of Catherine: The Queen was accused of having been a woman of 'abominable carnal desires' who had craftily and traitorously misled her royal spouse into believing that she was 'chaste and of pure, clean and honest living'. Worse still, she had followed 'daily her frail and carnal lust' …

1

Very similar language had been used of Anne, but this was different because the charges against Catherine were true – or substantially so. The traitorous intent may be questioned, because Catherine had no political agenda and doing away with her husband never crossed her mind, but she certainly behaved like a whore both before and after her marriage. Although she was suffi ciently streetwise to declare at

one point that ‘a woman might lie with a man, and yet have no child by him unless she would’, errant sexual behaviour posed an obvious threat to the succession.

2 If a woman was sleeping around, how did anyone know whether a child she might bear had been begotten by the King or not? There were no DNA tests in the sixteenth century. So even the most serious charge of treason was justifi able in contemporary terms and it was also treason for the Queen to will the actual bodily harm that her lovers were infl icting upon her. Although to modern eyes Catherine Howard was a stupid and oversexed adolescent who did not remotely deserve to die for her sins, at the time she was a moral outrage. No one ever successfully cheated on Henry VIII, but Catherine tried, uniquely among his consorts, and paid the ultimate price.

She was a younger daughter of Lord Edmund Howard, who was himself a younger brother of the Duke of Norfolk, and his wife, Joyce Culpepper. The couple had ten children altogether and it is not clear where in this 140

brood Catherine belonged. She had been born in about 1521, and had been offl oaded at the customary age of seven or eight into the grand household kept by her step-grandmother, the dowager Duc

hess.3 This was no doubt thought to be an advantageous placement, but it turned out to be a disastrous mistake. The Duchess's young ladies, of whom there were several, were not adequately chaperoned and in a sense were left to bring themselves up. It is diffi cult to be certain how much formal education they received. Catherine was later to be literate in English but not in Latin as far as anyone can tell; she could dance, play the lute and knew how to present herself in a courtly setting. She could also probably sustain a conversation in French but she had little or no book learning. In other words, her training was that of an aristocratic damsel destined for the court and a husband among the minor peerage or upper gentry. It was on the disciplinary side that the Dowager Duchess's regime was particularly defi cient. The

'maids quarters' in the great rambling Howard mansion at Horsham resembled nothing so much as a modern student dormitory, and the girls entertained their admirers more or less at will. Catherine's fi rst affair came at the age of 14, when she 'had to do' with a young music teacher named Henry Manno

x.4 This lasted for about a year, and then Mannox was replaced by a lover of more wealth and status, Francis Dereham. Dereham could have been a serious candidate for her hand in marriage and that may have been why the Duchess, who knew perfectly well what was going on, did not put a stop to it. Agnes Howard may have had her own somewhat eccentric notions of teaching girls how to look after themselves. Because Catherine and Dereham were lovers in the full sense of that word, the latter must have possessed more contraceptive knowledge than a young lady was supposed to have. As we have seen, she admitted as much, and such expertise must have come from somewhere.

In 1539, when she was about 18, Catherine moved out of this somewhat overheated environment into a place in the Chamber establishment of Queen Anne of Cleves. She was described as being very small and of 'mediocre beauty'. She had none of the courtly

accomplishments of Anne Boleyn but was suffi ciently presentable and her kinship with the powerful Duke of Norfolk would have done the rest. There was probably nothing particularly calculated about this appointment. When it was made, no one knew that Anne would turn out to be a pudding or that Henry would react so adversely to her. The requirement was for young ladies with good aristocratic credentials, not for great beauties, nor for sexual educators, although as we have seen the latter were certainly needed. So Catherine came within the King's fi eld of vision, rather as Anne had done though the household of Catherine, or Jane through that of Anne. There was, however, one big difference. Where Anne had been a fl irt, and Jane had offered

calm, Catherine was a skilled seductress. It is reasonable to suppose that with her peculiar background she had more sexual experience than any of her colleagues

– even the married ones – and it was this quality that caught the King's attention. He had failed to consummate his union with Anne, and was full of self-doubt, looking for reassurance, and this adolescent sex-pot was just what he was hoping for

.5 By about March or April of 1540, Henry was beginning to show a serious interest in her, and the Duke and the Dowager Duchess were quick to perceive a political opportunity.

It was not known at that point that the King had decided to end his failed marriage but it would not have required much skill to realize that Catherine's best initial response should be coy. It worked, and Henry quickly became infatuated. Gossip had already identifi ed her as the King's latest 'amour', long before Anne had any inkling that anything was wrong. Lavish presents began to be sent as early as April, and unlike Jane in similar circumstances, Catherine did not refuse them, so that when convocation dutifully declared the King's marriage null and void on 9 July, expectations were already formed. The ground was carefully prepared in spite of the shortness of the time. The king's non-consummation of his existing marriage was ascribed to his having acted under compulsion, a transparent fiction that was aimed against his fallen minister, Thomas Cromwell, then in the Tower awaiting the attentions of the executioner. Moreover Parliament, which now had jurisdiction in such matters, helpfully abolished the impediment of consanguinity insofar as it applied to fi rst cousins – which was the relationship between Catherine and Anne Boleyn. Henry's marriage to Anne might have been declared null but he had no desire to deny that he had slept with her. Both the French and Imperial courts greeted the repudiation of Anne of Cleves with theatrical displays of incredulity and disgust, which made the English ambassadors' lives diffi cult for a few weeks, but neither had the slightest intention of taking any action. If even the Duke of Cleves was not prepared to break off diplomatic relations, why should anyone else? Henry and Catherine were married at Oatlands on 28 July and it was observed that he was so uxorious that he could not keep his hands

off her, even in public. ‘The king’s affection was so marvellously set upon that gentlewoman, as it was never known that he had the like to any woman’, wrote Cranmer’s secretary Ralph Morice, and most of the comment was similarly indulgent.

6 There were great hopes that the succession would now be put beyond all reasonable doubt.

Unfortunately it was not to be. Henry’s health and spirits noticeably improved. He took to rising early, and hunted with renewed enthusiasm, but Catherine did not conceive. It is possible that the Queen herself was infertile and it was that rather than any precautions that had protected her during her earlier affairs, but 142

it is unlikely in view of her knowing comments. It seems more likely that Henry's grasp exceeded his reach and in spite of his evident desire, his performance fell far short. It is hard to imagine even so sexually active a girl as Catherine acting in the way that she subsequently did if her relationship with her husband had been entirely satisfactory. Henry was at best erratic and this drove his young bride wild with frustration. Somehow or other he managed not to notice that her maidenhead had already been taken but this was probably due to his absolute (and quite irrational) conviction that she was young and pure rather than to any lack of experience on his part. After all, he had suffered from the opposite delusion about Anne. Although Catherine did not conceive, for the time being she concealed any disappointment that she may have felt and all appeared to be well. Although her education seems to have been neglected and she had no intellectual pastimes, in some respects she was an ideal consort. She was, or appeared to be, totally submissive and chose (or had chosen for her) the appropriate motto

'Non autre volonte que la sienne' – 'no other will but his'. She was a courtier and a member of a courtly family, so it was not diffi cult for the King to become the centre of her world. However, her attitude was paradoxical. On the one hand she seems to have thought that her husband was omniscient, and on the other hand set out to deceive him with quite inadequate precautions. She knew how to make all the correct physical responses to his passionate advances but emotional commitment seems to have been lacking from the start. She needed a young and athletic lover, not this elderly and overweight fumbler. Moreover it soon transpired that his own ardent spirit was outrunning his fl agging body. He could no longer dance all night and hunt all day and an awareness of his own declining powers made him irritable and fretful. Nor was there any genuine companionship in his marriage to fall back on when the physical fl ames burned low; in other words it was a one-dimensional union. Then in March 1541 the King fell ill. He suffered from a chronic ulcer on his leg, the result of numerous falls in the tilt yard and the hunting fi eld as a young man, which suddenly closed up. He was in excruciating pain and it was feared for some time that he would die. The condition eased, but the optimism and apparent vitality of the previous autumn were now only memories. He became savage and morose and if he had been an unreliable lover in

the past, he was now virtually

hors de combat. There was also a political context to the King's fi fth marriage, because, as we have seen, Catherine was a Howard, and a niece of the Duke of Norfolk. Norfolk was the arch-enemy of Thomas Cromwell, and the opportunity to use Catherine against him was too good to be missed. Although the politics of the court could be Machiavellian, it would be an exaggeration to say that the Duke 'dangled' his niece under the King's nose with the intention of ruining the marriage that Cromwell

had brought about. Henry had already decided that he wanted rid of Anne before Catherine came on the scene. Nevertheless his infatuation did ensure that there was no going back on that decision. At the same time the Cleves marriage was not the only, nor even the principal, cause of Cromwell's fall; but it created a dissatisfaction in the King's mind that could be worked on to the minister's disadvantage, and that cer

tainly happened.7 How much the Duke actually knew about his niece before he encouraged the King to marry her, we do not know. Perhaps, in the light of the outcome, not very much. However, for the time being she symbolized a Howard ascendancy at court which brought many political advantages. It also created a time bomb, because the Howards were greedy and the way in which the Queen fi lled her household with her kindred and their hangers on created great resentment. It was expected that the consort would do her best for her relations, and both Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour had done the same, but Catherine went a step too far. She was given a lavish jointure, to the tune of £4,600 a year, which was more than any of her predecessors, and a good deal of freedom as to how she used it. It included a substantial part of the estates of the late Earl of Essex (Thomas Cromwell) and of the newly dissolved abbeys of Reading and Glastonbury, which was ironic in view of the fact that the Howards were notorious religious conservatives. Catherine was genuinely grateful for Henry's generosity, but had no idea how to use such largesse wisely. Within a few months the memory of Thomas Cromwell began to appear much less obnoxious. When the King was low, in the spring of 1541, he began to look back on his great minister with regret, and (more ominously) 'to have a sinister opinion of some of his chief men …'; in other words to blame his present councillors for having destroyed 'the best servant he ever had'. 8 This was not entirely fair, because the responsibility for Cromwell's fall lay with the King himself but he was not likely to acknowledge that and the blame game had sinister implications. Catherine simply lacked the resources to cope with the black royal moods that now became increasingly frequent. A suitable toy or pet when his fi ts of youthful exuberance were on him, she was incapable of being pleasing or supportive when he most needed her. For about a fortnight while he was ill in March, he declined to see her at all. This was not because she had displeased

him, but because he was aware how unattractive an object he had become and although that selfawareness does him credit it was not a hopeful sign for their future together. The Queen simply could not cope, and perhaps to escape from an intolerable situation, or perhaps out of irresponsible habit, in the spring of 1541, Catherine renewed a relationship with one of her former lovers, a young gentleman named Thomas Culpepper. At the time, Culpepper was a junior member of the King's Privy Chamber, so the opportunities for encounter would have been numerous. 144

Culpepper was an unscrupulous womanizer, and his intention seems to have been to establish a claim to Catherine if (or when) the King's deteriorating health carried him off.

9 The Queen may have encouraged him more out of ingrained habit than with any deliberate intent, but if so, her indulgence soon backfi red, because what may have started as a mild fl irtation soon became emotionally serious – at least on her part. She started writing passionate love letters to her paramour – an extremely dangerous course in a world where privacy was virtually unknown and anything committed to paper gave a hostage to fortune.10

Although Culpepper's visits were no doubt as surreptitious as they could be, it was not long before the principal lady of her Privy Chamber found out what was going on. Jane Rochford should have gone immediately to the King and declared what she knew – but she did no such thing. Perhaps out of loyalty to her mistress, or perhaps heavily bribed, she kept quiet and became in effect an accomplice. Throughout the royal progress to the north in the summer of 1541, Culpepper kept up his secret assignations with Jane Rochford's connivance. Every time that the court stopped overnight (on its progress), there were backstairs adventures. It is hard to believe that others of the Queen's entourage did not also know what was going on, but no one said anything, and it may be that Jane had her own methods for maintaining discipline.

At the same time, Francis Dereham also reappeared. He may have threatened to disclose their previous relationship but for whatever reason, Catherine appointed him her private secretary. No one was surprised that she should have promoted an old friend but then nobody knew what the nature of that friendship had been. Throughout the progress, it seems that Culpepper and Dereham were in and out of the Queen's bedroom like characters in a modern farce, but nobody dared to say anything to the King. All this activity exposed Catherine to blackmail and so did her earlier liaisons, given the misconception which her husband had of her. On 12 July Joan Bulmer, who had been one of Catherine's

'bedfellows' at Horsham, wrote to the Queen demanding a place at court as the price of her silence. It was duly provided, and it is

possible that several other places in the Queen's service were similarly fi lled.

11 That might explain the silence which enveloped her later misdemeanours. That may have been part of the bargain. Unfortunately for Catherine, there were others who were interested in her behaviour who were less easy to silence. Gossip began to circulate and Henry must have been the only person at Court who did not harbour some suspicion of the Queen's activities. At the same time, as we have seen, her kindred was not popular, because the Howards did not bear their good fortune lightly. Cromwell had had few committed friends at court, but there were many who owed obligations to him, and mostly the evangelical writers and preachers

whom he had patronized. John Foxe was later to lament the passing of his Godly infl uence, and that may well have been an exaggeration, but there were certainly some evangelicals on the look out for a chance to av

enge him.12

One of these was a man called John Lascelles. Lascelles was a Protestant whose life was to end at the stake fi ve years later, but at this time he was a key witness for the prosecution. His sister, Mary Hall, had been in the service of the Dowager Duchess at the time of Catherine's upbringing at Horsham and knew a great deal about what that young lady had been up to. Whether Mary herself was a Protestant is not clear, but at some time in the summer of 1541 she told her brother all that she knew. She may have been motivated by sheer malice because she is alleged to have said of the Queen at the time, 'Let her alone, for if she holds on as she begins, she will be nought within a while.

'13 Lascelles, however, had no intention of leaving her alone and on 1 November he sought out the Archbishop of Canterbury and unburdened himself. The King had by this time returned to Hampton Court, and by a supreme irony had ordered that very day a special mass of thanksgiving for the happiness that his Queen had brought him. He was living in a fool's paradise, because Cranmer realized at once that so convincing and circumstantial a story must have substance to it. He was also, although discreetly, an enemy of the Howards and the opportunity was too good to miss. What Mary Hall knew, of course, related to the days before Catherine's marriage to the King, so it did not constitute evidence of adultery. What it did do was to demonstrate that the Queen had not been the innocent bride that Henry had taken her for. It also provided some evidence for a pre-contract with Dereham, which, if established, would have nullifi ed the royal marriage altogether. On 2 November Cranmer passed the King a discreet note while he was at mass, with the request that he read it privately. 14 By this time the Archbishop had also communicated his knowledge to the Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Audley, and to the Earl of Hertford, both also enemies of the Howards.

Henry's reaction was surprisingly low key. He was inclined to dismiss

the story as a slanderous forgery, cooked up by a jealous woman. Nevertheless he instituted an inquiry in order, as he put it, to clear his wife's name, and entrusted it to William Fitzwilliam, the Earl of Southampton, one of his most senior and trusted advisers. Southampton examined Lascelles, who repeated his story, and then went down to Sussex to interview Mary Hall, who also told the same tale. Meanwhile, almost certainly without the King's knowledge, Dereham and Mannox had been detained by Sir Thomas Wrothesley, the former on a rather far-fetched charge of piracy. Henry was not yet convinced, but Catherine was ordered to keep her chamber and await his pleasure. By this time the Howards'

numerous enemies had sensed their opportunity. On 6 November the King 146

returned to London without seeing his wife, which was an ominous sign. By this time several of Catherine's ladies had also been arrested but, most seriously, Dereham had broken down under interrogation. Not only did he confess his earlier intimacy but also his more recent access and in the process implicated Culpepper. By the time the King met his Privy Council in emergency session after his return to London, the whole issue had escalated alarmingly. Henry had proved credulous when confronted with the evidence against Anne Boleyn but this time credulity was not in question. Not only had he misjudged his young bride, but she had made him a cuckold into the bargain. When confronted by the full evidence that had now been painstakingly assembled, the King exploded with fury and threatened to torture the ungrateful girl to death. As had happened with Henry before, the measure of his infatuation was now the measure of his disillusionment. When his rage subsided, he collapsed into an embarrassing orgy of weeping and self-pity. The realization that he had not only been unable to satisfy his young wife but had also been unable to prevent her from fi nding her satisfaction elsewhere was the ultimate humiliation. For the time being nobody ventured to mention either courtly 'amours' or the prospect of a Duke of York. Of course, none of this was his fault. The responsibility lay partly with Catherine herself, and partly with those who had persuaded him to take such a wanton slut into his bed. The fact that the choice had been entirely his conveniently escaped his memory and just as Anne's fall had brought down the whole Boleyn party in ruin, now the Howard ascendancy was destroyed at a stroke. Servants and minor members of the family began to be rounded up. On 10 December the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk was arrested, and on 13 December Catherine's aunt, Lady Bridgewater, Catherine Daubeney. The Duke himself was neither arrested nor charged but was forced to abase himself and then retreated tactfully to his estates. On 22 December the entire family, except for the Duke, was found guilty of misprision of treason for concealing the Queen's offences. This could have resulted in perpetual imprisonment and the loss of all property, and was indeed premature because Catherine had not yet come to trial and the fact of her treason was not yet established. Most of them were entirely innocent of any intention to deceive and were pardoned and released over the next few months. Agnes was in a rather different position, because not only had she known perfectly well what was going on under her roof, but

she was also found to have destroyed some of Dereham's papers. However in this case the King did not prove to be vindictive and she too was released in May 1542. No doubt she had learned a salutary lesson, but the shock of this experience had a paralysing effect upon the whole clan. The Duke did not forfeit his offi ce of Lord Treasurer, and soon recovered a measure of favour, so that he was leading the King's forces

into Scotland by the autumn. He was brought down fi nally by the indiscretions of his son the Earl of Surrey in 1546, and was in the Tower awaiting execution on the night in January 1547 when King Henry died. He lived to be restored under Mary and to die in his bed in August 1554.

Catherine was less fortunate. The day after the Council meeting, on 7 November, Cranmer went to Hampton Court to interrogate her and to make sure that she remained under restraint. At fi rst she wept copiously and denied that she had been guilty of any offence but the following day either broke down or decided that confession was the best way to turn aside wrath. The whole story came out, interspersed with fi ts of hyster

ics.15 Meanwhile, Francis Dereham had confessed to intercourse with her at Horsham but claimed that there had been a contract of marriage between them. If that had been the case, it would of course have meant that her marriage to Henry had been null from the start and, since she could not cuckold a man to whom she had never been married, the whole charge of treason would have fallen to the ground. She would have been guilty of deception, and possibly of bigamy, but not of adultery. It was, perhaps, a measure of Catherine's stupidity that she would not entertain this line of defence. Either she was unable to understand its implications, or she was too proud to consider that a Howard could ever have married a Dereham. For whatever reason, she denied that any such pre-contract had ever existed, and thus effectively laid her head on the block. A few days later she wrote out a full and abject confession and threw herself on the King's mercy.

In this confession, which still survives, she described her relations with both Mannox and Dereham in graphic detail, but claimed that her affair with the latter had ended '… almost a year before your majesty was married to my lady Anne of Cleves' – that is in January 1539. 'I was so desirous', she went on, 'to be taken into your grace's favour and so blinded with the desire of worldly glory that I could not, nor had grace, to consider how great a fault it was to conceal my former faults from your majesty, considering that I intended ever during my life to be faithful and true unto your majesty aft

er …’16

The line of defence is clear. Yes, she had been guilty of deception and had not come to Henry as a virgin bride but that was all. All charges of adultery since her marriage, she continued to deny vehemently. The council did not immediately respond, being concerned at that point mainly with the issue of pre-contract, which was not even mentioned. However, shortly after they were confronted with Dereham’s confession, and as a result Thomas Culpepper was arrested. He in his turn confessed to a sexual relationship with Catherine since her marriage

– during that problematic summer progress. This was confi rmed in a sense by Jane Rochford, who was now struggling painfully in the toils that she had 148

created for herself. She declared that to the best of her knowledge, Culpepper was right, and that intercourse had taken plac

e.17 Catherine continued her denials, but her attempts to draw a line under her earlier indiscretions were now fatally compromised. If she had behaved in such an irresponsible fashion before her marriage, what was to prevent her from carrying on in the same manner? She was removed from Hampton Court to the former monastery of Syon, with four ladies and a dozen servants. On 13 November her household was closed down and her jewels were inventoried. All the accused were now in desperate straits and Cranmer and Wriothesley made another attempt to persuade the Queen to confess. As a result the story became more circumstantial – and more tangled. Catherine admitted indiscreet nocturnal meetings but continued to deny that they went further than dalliance and talk. Culpepper also changed his story. While admitting that he had intended sexual intercourse, a desire which he claimed was mutual, he now denied that it had taken place and that the sexual relationship which had admitted to earlier had amounted to no more than that. At the same time he claimed that these encounters had been arranged by Jane Rochford, who was thus made to appear as Catherine's pander. 18 Although it would have been convenient if the Queen had admitted her guilt, it was not really necessary. The statute of 1534 had laid down that if any person should '… by craft imagine, invent, practice or attempt any bodily harm to be done or committed to the king's most royal person, or the Queen's, or the heir apparent's …'19 then

that person was guilty of treason. Culpepper had certainly 'by craft imagined'

bodily harm to Catherine, so that the fact that he had not actually succeeded in violating the Queen did not matter in terms of defi ning the crime. The fact that the Queen had condoned and even encouraged his action was neither here nor there. By not denouncing his actions at the time, she was guilty of conspiring her own bodily harm. Had she fallen pregnant, it would automatically have been assumed that the child was the King's and a gross deception would have been practised on the realm.

Throughout the third week of November the interrogations continued

intensively, and it is likely that both Culpepper and Dereham were racked. Despite the King's threats, Catherine was not subjected to any such ordeal – indeed the only woman known to have been tortured throughout this period was the heretic Anne Askew, who added defi ance to her demerits.

20 Nevertheless, the case against Catherine built up damningly and by 22 November the Council was convinced of the guilt of all three. On that day it was decreed that Catherine was no longer to be styled Queen but only the Lady Catherine Howard. This had no judicial signifi cance, but was perhaps a pointer to the way in which it had been decided to proceed against her. On 1 December the two men were arraigned and both

pleaded guilty. In fact Dereham's guilt was by no means established because, despite the opportunities that his position in the household had created, there is no proof that he had either resumed or attempted to resume, an intimate relationship. He seems to have been mainly the victim of the King's malice for having 'spoiled' his innocent bride. However, his plea of guilty resolved the matter so far as the court was concerned and both men were taken to Tyburn on 10 December. Because he was a member of the Privy Chamber, Culpepper was beheaded 'by the king's mercy' but Dereham suffered the full penalty of hanging, drawing and quartering. Both men allegedly 'made a good end', confessing their faults and asking the assembled people to pray for them. What the crowd's reaction may have been is not recorded. It was not every day that gentlemen were despatched in such a fashion and curiosity probably assembled a good number. As was customary, their heads were displayed on London Bridge, and Catherine's fate was sealed.

21

As the French ambassador commented, Dereham had been executed because

'… his coming to the queen was to an ill intent', and by the same criterion, the Queen had 'traiterously imagined and procured' that he should be so positioned

'that they might resume their wicked courses'. In other words, Catherine was as guilty as her love

rs.22 The appointment of another of her former associates, Katherine Tylney as a chamberer (like Joan Bulmer who was not named), was also construed as 'proof of her will to return to her abominable life …' The same observer also remarked that Culpepper had been suffi ciently intimate with the King as to 'share his couch' – by which he meant that he had been trusted with guard duty in the royal bedchamber, which involved sleeping on a pallet bed at the King's feet – and 'apparently wished to share the Queen's too'. For whatever reason, Catherine was never brought to trial. Anne Boleyn had been tried by her peers, but this time an Act of Attainder was used. It may have been felt that the public trial of a second Queen for adultery

within the space of six years would have brought the King to ridicule, but it is more likely that the usefulness of such a procedure had been demonstrated in the meanwhile by the case of Thomas Cromwell, and it was simply selected as a convenient way of sparing Henry's feelings, which were still pretty raw at the end of December 1541. Lord Chancellor Audley apparently had some qualms about proceeding in this fashion, fearing that justice would not be seen to be done, but the King's wishes prevailed. 23 After a singularly cheerless Christmas, Parliament reconvened on 16

January and the Bill of Attainder was introduced in the House of Lords on 21

January. This confi rmed the attainders of those who had already been executed, which was a standard procedure, and declared Catherine to have been guilty of treason. Rather surprisingly, the other person who was similarly condemned 150

was Jane Rochford. Jane had (by modern standards) not been guilty of anything except crass stupidity, but her own confession told against her. If, as she claimed, Culpepper had been guilty of intercourse with the Queen, then she was guilty by association. However, as we have seen, there is every reason to doubt whether that had actually happened and while the wish might have been suffi cient to condemn the principals, such an outcome should have exonerated Jane. On the other hand it could well have been argued that if she was an unsuccessful pander, it was not for want of trying. The Bill passed its fi nal reading in the Commons on 8 February, and would normally have had to await the royal assent at the end of the session, on 1 April. However, Henry did not want to prolong the business any further, and a special assent was delivered by Letters Patent on 11 February. The two women were warned for death.

Catherine's mood over the previous two months or so is hard to assess. Under interrogation she had been by turns tearful and hysterical and that phase seems to have been succeeded by violent fl uctuations. Sometimes she would collapse in weeping and lamentation but sometimes she appeared more preoccupied with her clothes than with the fate that hung over her. As late as Christmas she seems to have been unable to grasp the seriousness of her situation. On 10 February, the decision having been made, she was moved by river from Syon to the Tower, not to the royal apartments but to an appropriate dungeon, and two days later her fate was communicated to her. At this point she seems to have collapsed into a sort of numb acquiescence. As far as we know, she did not even appeal to her erstwhile husband for mercy – perhaps she realized that it would be pointless. All she did was to request a swift and secret death. The former was granted, and the latter refused, because it was necessary to have witnesses to so important a sacrifi ce. So it came about that a large crowd was gathered on Tower green in the bleak dawn of Monday, 13 February. An eyewitness account of the event survives in the reports of Charles de Marillac, the French ambassador, who was pr

esent.24 The hapless Catherine was almost too distraught to know what was happening, and almost too weak to ascend the scaffold. She was able to utter just a few words, confessing her faults and 'desiring all Christian people to take regard to her worthy and just punishment'.

It was generally agreed that she made a Godly and Christian end, more becoming of respect than anything that she had done in her life. She was just 20 years old, a mere child, broken on the wheel of her own desires. Jane Rochford reacted very differently. She had far more cause to feel that she had been unjustly used, but no such sentiment was aired. It would have been almost unthinkable for anyone condemned for treason to protest their innocence, or rail upon their judges. Under the stress of the occasion, however, Jane became voluble to the point of incoherence. Her

confession and pious exhortation rambled on until the patience of the offi cials and of some of the crowd was exhausted. Both women died cleanly under the axe and both were interred in the nearby chapel of St Peter ad Vincula. Jane was expendable, and in the circumstances a fi tting object of the royal wrath, but whether Catherine would have suffered the ultimate penalty if she had not been the tool of a powerful aristocratic faction is another matter. If she had not been the Queen, the confessional and a suitable penance would have awaited her rather than the headsman's axe. The fate of a disgraced and repudiated woman in the sixteenth century was not enviable, but many ordinary girls endured it and lived to tell the tale. It was typical of the period that a woman guilty of such offences should be ostracized and condemned, whereas her male partner would escape unscathed unless he was identifi ed as the father of a bastard child. Fornication was not an offence in the common law but was reserved to the Church Courts, and the judgement of society. However, none of this applied at the highest level and the Queen as whore was an almost unthinkable insult to the royal honour. Catherine, moreover, carried a heavy load of political baggage, just as Anne Boleyn had done. Anne had had to die because she was personally dangerous, Catherine had to die because her kindred were. There can be little doubt that Catherine's disgrace was more than personal; it carried an indictment of the whole Howard family. There would have been little point in arresting the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk if her offence had been merely bad household management. The charge of misprision of treason was based upon the thesis that she had been party to a conspiracy to foist a wanton girl on the King – not as a mistress (which might have been acceptable) but as a wife. Such charges were suffi cient to destroy the family as a political force and for that same reason Catherine's status as a whore had to be substantiated and the full penalty of treason exacted. It was probably a guilty awareness on Henry's part that he had contributed to his own humiliation, which prevented the charges against Agnes from being pursued. By the time that she was pardoned they had had their political effect – and Catherine was dead.

The infl iction of capital punishment upon women was comparatively rare in the early sixteenth century. Females were executed for murder and robbery but on nothing like the scale of their male

contemporaries and Anne Boleyn was the fi rst gentlewoman to suffer on the block in living memory. Witchcraft, while claiming many women's lives in the early seventeenth century, was hardly an issue in the reign of Henry VIII. A few female Lollards had been burned, but the execution of Anne Askew in 1546 was notorious partly because it was so rare. Margaret Pole had been despatched for high treason in the summer of 1541, but adultery was the treason of Queens and the simultaneous despatch of two women 152

for that offence in February 1542 was a very notable event. Nobody has ever had much good to tell of Catherine. She was an instrument of her family, who was broken in the effort largely because of the defects in her own personality. She was obviously very attractive to men and may well have had others, in addition to Henry Mannox, of whom we know nothing because it was in no one's interest to disclose them. Having discovered this fact at an early age, she was quite unable to discipline herself and became, in effect, a 'girl who couldn't say no'. In her original confession, she claimed to have put her wanton past behind her and after her marriage to have kept herself for the King. What she did not, of course, say was that Henry was a very unsatisfactory lover and that, even by her own admission, she had sought solace in fl irtations which were second nature to her. Her confession was not accepted as satisfactory at the time, and has become no more convincing today. She was in effect just a silly girl in the wrong place at the wrong time – and for that her family can be largely blamed.

As we have seen, Henry took her behaviour very hard. She had infl icted more psychological damage upon him in a few short months than several successive Popes, or Francis of France over many years. By the summer of 1540 his abortive encounter with Anne of Cleves had warned him that all was not well but Catherine had appeared to offer rejuvenation. The lustful, potent Henry who had wrought havoc with the damsels of the court was back! Then he was forced to confront the truth. He was old, tired and periodically sick. His once magnifi cent frame was now grossly overweight and regularly overtaxed. The sexual potency that had once kept Catherine of Aragon in a state of regular pregnancy was now unable to satisfy a young girl who had fewer years than his own daughter. A consort was supposed to maintain a King's honour, but this ignorant child had humiliated him in the most intimate possible way. Fortunately, international affairs did not await the King's mood or convenience. During the ill-fated summer progress of 1541 Henry thought that he had persuaded James V of Scotland to meet him at York. James's council persuaded him otherwise, and the English king took his non-appearance as an insult. Then at about the same time, on 10 July, Charles and Francis resumed their interminable confl ict, and these two events shook the diplomatic kaleidoscope. Negotiations had been going on for a

marriage between Mary and the duc d'Orleans, but these had foundered on the reef of Mary's illegitimacy. Early in 1542, at the same time that Catherine was awaiting the attentions of the executioner, Henry began secret negotiations for a renewal of his old Imperial alliance. In June plans were settled for a joint invasion of France in 1543, and through the autumn ships and guns were gathered for the impending action.

25 No doubt these bellicose preparations restored a measure of vitality and confi dence to the King, and perhaps they were intended to do just

that. However, the first action came against Scotland. Remembering what had happened a generation earlier, Henry was minded to exclude the Scots from the forthcoming action, by a treaty preferably, but if not by intimidation. The treaty option did not work, and in October 1542 the Duke of Norfolk launched a brief but savage raid into the lowlands. It was by doing his master's bidding in such ways that the Duke crept back into favour after his niece's disgrace. James could not fail to respond to such provocation and early in November he launched 20,000 men into the debateable ground north of Carlisle. His army walked into a well-laid trap and was routed at the battle of Solway Moss on 23 October. It was not a bloody defeat like Flodden but it left a lot of Scottish nobles as prisoners in English hands. It also took Scotland out of the forthcoming continental war because not only had its main field army been destroyed but James V himself died about a week later of unrelated causes, leaving his infant daughter Mary as his heir. These events, and the prospect of action in France, restored some youthful bounce to the decrepit Henry, and as his black moods retreated he began to contemplate marriage again. As we have seen, by March 1543 he was showing a serious interest in Lady Latimer.

The damage that Catherine had done to Henry was severe, but not irreparable. In a sense she had done him a favour, because she had proved conclusively that he was not the man he had been, and that sort of realism was necessary. He lowered his sights, and did not make the same demands upon his sixth wife that he had attempted to make on all the others. Of the six, Catherine stands out because she was the only one to be actually guilty of serious misconduct. Unlike Catherine of Aragon or Anne Boleyn, she had no political presence of her own. In that respect she resembled Jane Seymour but there the similarity began and ended. Jane's sexuality had been gentle and passive, Catherine's was devious and manipulative. Unlike any of Henry's other wives, she was the creation of a family faction, rather than the founder of one. The Boleyns and the Seymours would have had a presence at Court, even if their leading women had not shared the royal bed – the Parrs probably not. But neither the Boleyns nor the Seymours were powerful in the same sense as the Howards. Anne Boleyn had been more a councillor than a consort, but she had always been meticulous in her preservation of the King's honour and even her

alleged misdemeanours had produced anger rather than humiliation or depression. Like Anne, but in a completely different way, Catherine did not know how to be a consort. She accepted all the privileges and wealth of her position but gave nothing in return except a sexual complaisance, which turned out to be fraudulent. She is not known to have been the patron of any group, or of any particular style of piety, nor did she receive petitions soliciting her arbitration. Her time, admittedly was short, but then so was that 154

of Jane, who was a conspicuous peacemaker in the royal family. Catherine was at daggers drawn with Mary, who seems to have suspected her motives from the start, and who was a dedicated spinster fi ve years her senior. Paradoxically the only member of the royal family with whom she seems to have been on good terms was her immediate predecessor, Anne of Cleves. It must have been an attraction of opposites because no two women could have been more different, except in one important respect – both were relatively uneducated, and when Anne was at court the Queen may have sought her company as a relief from the demands of her more learned compatriots. Judged by the standards normally applied to a consort, Catherine had almost no redeeming feature, and the fact that it took a major crisis to convince Henry of that fact is probably a better indication of his declining judgement than either the Boulogne campaign or the rough wooing, which as we shall see, was a seriously counterproductive policy.

8

The Queens who Never Were: Jane Grey and

Mary Stuart

These women were both claimants or pretenders not to the role of consort but to the Crown in their own right. They therefore belong in a different league from the ladies we have so far considered. Mary was Queen of Scotland in her own right almost from birth, and for about 18 months was also Queen Consort of France. Her claim to the throne of England was by what was called ‘indefeasible hereditary succession’, a custom or rule recognized in both England and Scotland (but not in France) whereby the oldest legitimate descendant of the last monarch to produce offspring was recognized as heir. By this custom males took precedence over females, irrespective of seniority, but in the absence of men, the right of women to succeed was recognized. Mary was the daughter and only surviving child of James V of Scotland, born just a week before his death, and thus the granddaughter of Margaret Tudor, Henry VIII’s elder sister, who had married King James IV. If it was claimed – as it was in Catholic Europe – that both Henry VIII’s younger children were illegitimate,

then the lawful Tudor line was represented on his death by his elder daughter, Mary, and after her by Mary of Scotland. The English, however, did not see it that way. As far as English law was concerned, Edward, Henry's son was legitimate because Papal sanctions were not recognized, and he was the heir in 1547.

1 Mary also recognized his right, and did not put forward a claim. Although unchallenged, Edward's position was nevertheless ambiguous, because he had also been declared the heir by his father's last succession Act in 1544, and by the will which that Act had authorized. In other words an Englishman could choose whether he recognized Edward by hereditary right, or by statutory authorization. When Edward died childless, the issue returned, but was resolved, as we shall see, in favour of the statute. In neither of these situations was any claim by Mary of Scotland considered, but when Mary Tudor also died childless, the issue returned.

In 1558 there were two possible claimants representing different principles of succession. Elizabeth represented the statutory policy laid down in 1544, 156

whereas Mary of Scotland, whose claim had been ignored in the Succession Act, represented indefeasible hereditary right. At the time it was no contest, because Mary was betrothed to the Dauphin, and England was at war with France. Moreover the Succession Act was universally respected. The issue arose over who should be recognized as Elizabeth's heir should she, like her siblings, die childless. As we shall see, that problem was to affl ict English politics for over twenty y

ears.2

By comparison, Jane Grey was a very short-term problem. She was not the direct heir by anyone's standards, except those of Edward VI. Edward issued (or tried to issue) Letters Patent recognizing Jane as his successor when it became clear that he was mortally ill in the summer of 1553.

3 It looked at fi rst as though his wishes would be obeyed, but the superiority of Mary's claim, both by hereditary right and by the Succession Act, was soon apparent. Jane was consigned to the Tower, and eventually to the block. She became a footnote to history. However, because her pretension came fi rst chronologically, and it was she rather than either of the Marys who can claim in a sense to have been England's fi rst ruling Queen, Jane takes priority for consideration.

Jane was the eldest of three daughters of Henry Grey, Marquis of Dorset, and his wife Frances Brandon. She was born at Bradgate Hall in Leicestershire in October 1537. Frances was the elder daughter of Mary, Henry VIII's younger sister by her second marriage to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, and by the Succession Act of 1544 was next in line to the throne should all Henry's own offspring die childless. That was not the case in the summer of 1553, when both Mary and Elizabeth were very much alive. Frances was also alive, and indeed Edward's 'device for the succession' had started by naming any son who might be born to her. Only when it was apparent that his time was very short did the young King switch his option to Jane, who should have had no claim by anyone's standards. The reason for this implausible change was that Edward knew Jane and liked her. Her education and theological tastes matched his own and she was almost exactly his age. For several years there had been talk of a marriage

between them and Jane seems to have been brought up with that in mind. Her early education at Bradgate was ordinary enough, except that she seems to have been taught Latin from the beginning, which was not normal for a girl. At the age of about 9 she went to live in the household of the Dowager Queen Catherine and for a year or so appears to have shared the education of the precocious Edward there, which elevated her onto an altogether new plane of learning

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For two or three months Mary, Elizabeth and Jane all continued in Catherine's establishment. The latter's controversial and somewhat hasty marriage to Lord Thomas Seymour prompted Mary to move out. She could afford to do so, since she was of age and the estates conferred upon her by the terms of Henry's will

were promptly assigned. Elizabeth and Jane stayed put. Elizabeth was 13 and her estates had not yet been assigned. Jane stayed by a special arrangement between the Marquis of Dorset and Lord Thomas Seymour, in the course of which Lord Thomas hinted broadly that he was in a position to arrange her marriage to the young king. 'You will see', one contemporary observed, 'he will marry her to the king.

'5 Why he should have thought that – and still more why the Marquis should have believed him, remain something of a mystery. Grey paid Seymour something like £2,000 for the privilege.

In the summer of 1548, while Catherine was pregnant, she discovered the indiscreet Lord Thomas with his arms around Elizabeth. The girl was sent away in disgrace and, having nowhere obvious to go, retreated to the home of Sir Anthony and Lady Denny at Cheshunt. Then, early in September, Catherine died in childbirth, leaving Jane apparently unprotected in the household of a notorious womanizer. Lord Thomas, however, was not a child abuser and the Marquis appears to have continued to trust him. His fi rst thought was to break up the overlarge household that he had kept up while married to the Queen Dowager, and after a friendly exchange of correspondence, Dorset took his daughter back to Bradgate, where she arrived on about 20 September. Seymour, meanwhile had changed his mind, and decided for political reasons to retain a much larger establishment than he could really afford. Jane's role in all this was obvious, so he opened negotiations with Dorset to get her back. The latter, meanwhile, may have grown sceptical of these ambitions because he had also opened a correspondence with the Lord Protector for a marriage between Jane and the Earl of Hertford, his eldest son. It is probable that Dorset was simply keeping his options open because, within a couple of weeks Lord Thomas had persuaded him to allow his daughter to return to Hanworth. On 1 October the girl herself wrote to Thomas, expressing her gratitude for his kindness and describing him as her 'loving and kind father'. His charm seems to have been working overtime because at the same time her mother, Frances, also wrote to him as her 'very good lord and brother'. It may have been Lord Seymour's friend and associate Sir William Sharrington who got on so well with the Marchioness but relations between the two

establishments could hardly have been more cosy.

Within weeks, Thomas was in trouble up to his neck, for reasons that had nothing directly to do with Jane and the Greys were, understandably, very worried. The Lord Admiral had been plotting a coup against his brother, whom he detested by this time, and boasting about how many armed men he could raise. At the same time, Sharrington had been fi ltering off money from the Bristol Mint, for which he had responsibility. The intention seems to have been to get the Lord Protector's patent overturned by statute, but other, more direct action was also 158

suspected. In January 1549, Lord Thomas Seymour was arrested, interrogated, and charged with treason. This charge was not derived from the plot against his brother, which would not have been treason because the latter was not the King, but from an alleged intention to marry the Princess Elizabeth. The Princess was also interrogated, and although she behaved with admirable self possession, the charge was deemed to be proved. Lord Thomas was condemned by Act of Attainder and executed on 20 March 1549.

6 The Protector seems to have been genuinely perplexed as to what to do but his temper was not sweetened when he discovered that his brother had been endeavouring to sabotage his marriage plans for his son by continuing to dangle Jane before the King – a circumstance of which the Marquis of Dorset had not informed him. Jane's reaction to the loss of her 'kind father' in such dramatic circumstances is not known but all Seymour's property was forfeit by his attainder, so the ground was literally swept from under her. By the end of March, and still short of her twelfth birthday, she was back at Bradgate.

At such a distance from the Court there was no longer any question of her sharing the King's lessons (if that is what had been happening), but the Greys decided to persevere with the quality of education that she had been receiving and engaged John Aylmer, the future bishop of London, as her tutor. Aylmer was a learned man, and strong Protestant, and in friendly correspondence with such leading continental reformers as Heinrich Bullinger and John ab Ulmis. Aylmer was hugely impressed with his charge and was soon encouraging her to correspond directly with his friends, who were equally impressed with her piety and her Latin.

7 It seems clear that at this point, in the summer of 1549, Dorset still had more than an eye on Jane marrying Edward, and wanted to make sure that she would be a fi t companion for him. Like over-anxious parents in any period, the Marquis and his lady fretted over their eldest child, and according to her own account were 'sharp and severe' with her. Roger Ascham, who visited Bradgate that summer, declared that it was her parents' 'taunts, pinches, nips and bobs' that caused her to seek solace in the company of Plato, and 'gentle master'

Aylmer. Perhaps, but Ascham's work was more than a little

hagiographic and it may well be that Jane was not quite the humble and polite bookworm whom he portrayed. As one recent biographer has observed, she was probably ‘a priggish, opinionated teenager, contemptuous of her parents’. She knew what was expected of her but a taste for ‘playing, dancing and being merry’ can also be glimpsed through his record. The one thing that is quite clear is that she was formidably intelligent, a quality that she does not seem to have inherited directly from either of her parents. Her younger sisters, Catherine and Mary were much more truly their parents’ children in that respect.

Jane stayed at Bradgate, or other Grey residences as appropriate, for the next four years. Her prospects changed as the political events of the reign unfolded but neither she nor indeed her father had much control over those events. The disturbances of July and August 1549 did not touch Bradgate, and the Marquis played no leading role in their suppression. Nor was he active in the coup that overthrew the Protector in October. What he did succeed in doing was to ingratiate himself with the man who effectively took over the Protestor's position – John Dudley, Earl of Warwick. After the coup, Warwick was locked in a three-month battle with the religious conservatives on the Council, whose main motivation in getting rid of Somerset had been to check England's progress towards Protestantism. Warwick's own incentives had been quite different and he was happy to see the Reformation continue, but in order to secure control he needed allies in the Council, and that meant Protestants. That was where the Marquis came in. He may not have been a very shrewd politician, or even a good administrator, but he was a Protestant and he was sworn of the Council on 28 November 1549.

8 This raised his political profi le substantially and he came to be regarded as one of Warwick's closest and most reliable allies.

Meanwhile, Jane's matrimonial prospects were ebbing away. One of the obstacles in the way of her union with the King had always been the fact that he was supposed to be committed to Mary of Scotland by the treaty of Greenwich of 1543. However the Scots had repudiated that treaty and numerous English attempts to resurrect it had fi nally ended in failure in 1548 when Mary was betrothed to the Dauphin, Francis. War with France had followed, from August 1549 to March 1550, and with the peace that ended that war came talk of a matrimonial alliance. Negotiations proceeded for over a year and were fi nally concluded in June 1551, whereby a marriage was agreed but was not to take place until Elizabeth, Henry II's eldest daughter, had passed the age of 12 (she was, at that point, 6) which was the minimum canonical age for co-habitation.

9

The marriage never took place because Edward died when Elizabeth was 8, but he was considered to be committed, and that shut off Jane's chances – if they had ever existed. Similarly, relations with Edward Seymour chilled noticeably after Dorset's choice in October 1549. He became so close to the Earl of Warwick that when the latter had himself raised to the Dukedom of Northumberland on 11

October 1551, he caused the Marquis to be created Duke of Suffolk at the same time. Shortly after the Duke of Somerset was arrested, and with his execution for felony in February 1552, his title was extinguished and his property forfeit. The Earl of Hertford disappeared into limbo and another matrimonial option was closed.

The dukedom of Suffolk brought further wealth to the Greys and by the summer of 1552 they had moved their main centre of operations from Bradgate to the former Carthusian monastery of Sheen, in Surrey. There Jane seems to have lived until her ill-fated marriage to Lord Guildford Dudley in June 1553. Guildford was the Duke of Northumberland's last unmarried son, and his father's intentions had not originally focused on Jane at all. He had been negotiating for some time for the hand of her cousin, Margaret Clifford, the daughter of her Aunt Eleanor, Frances's sister, and Henry Clifford, Earl of Cumberland. His purpose seems to have been to establish a fi rm link with one of the northern peerage families, but Clifford was having none of it.

10 As early as July 1552 the Privy Council had written to both peers to 'grow to some good end', concerning the marriage, which was probably Northumberland's way of putting pressure on his colleague – but to no avail. Frustrated in his quest, Northumberland turned to his complaisant ally, the Duke of Suffolk, and on 21 May 1553 effected a series of prestigious marriages. His daughter Catherine was married to Henry Hastings, heir to the Earl of Huntingdon, Jane's sister, also Catherine, to Henry Herbert, son of the Earl of Pembroke, and Jane herself to Guildford Dudley. This appears to have been an act of parental oppression on the Greys' part, because all the indications are that Jane loathed her spouse and was only compelled to sleep with him by 'the urging of her mother and the violence of her father, who compelled her to accede to his commands with blows'. Jane had become a bluestocking, perhaps as much by force of circumstances as by taste, and some of her stilted, elaborate letters to Heinrich Bullinger testify both to her accomplishments and her ambition. At the age of 16 she was fl uent in Latin, profi cient in Greek and anxious to learn Hebrew. In an earlier generation she would have been a natural candidate for the cloister, an abbess in the making. As it was, she was forced into bed with Guildford Dudley.

It has been argued that this marriage was part of a deep-laid plot by the Duke of Northumberland to divert the Crown into the Dudley family, but at the time even the suspicious Jehan Scheyfre, the Imperial ambassador, merely noted that Jane was a cousin of the King's. It is likely that, in late May, Northumberland did not even

know of that schoolboy exercise on the succession, known as the ‘King’s Device’. Edward had been ill since February, but the nature of his ailment was not understood, and in late May he was in remission. It was only about a week into June that his condition deteriorated alarmingly, and the physicians who had been glibly talking of a complete recovery, suddenly decided that his death was not only cer

tain but imminent.11 This desperate news concentrated minds, not only Northumberland’s but also the King’s, and caused the school exercise to be brought out. When he had written it, Edward had been obsessed with the male

succession and his order started with any son who might be born of the Lady Frances (the Duchess of Suffolk), followed by any son who might be born to Jane. There was much more in the same vein but the important thing was that it ignored the Succession Act of 1544 and excluded both Mary and Elizabeth as being not only female but also illegitimate. After that, its provisions followed the Act in excluding the Scots, and including the 'Suffolk line'. However, in the emergency that had now arisen, it was not much use. Frances had not conceived for years, and was probably passed what was known at the time as her 'climacteric'. Jane was newly married but had scarcely had time to get pregnant, even if the will had been there. Reluctantly, therefore, the King altered his 'Device', settling the Crown upon 'the Lady Jane and her heirs male', by a simple insertion in the te

xt.12

It was clearly Northumberland's intention to get this 'Device', which had no legal status, confi rmed by Parliament, which in so doing would have repealed the Succession Act – but there was no time. As June advanced the terminal nature of the King's illness became more apparent and he ordered that his

'Device' be embodied in Letters Patent. There was much resistance to this, the lawyers pointing out that an Act of Parliament could not be overruled by Letters Patent and that, in any case, the King was a minor who could not even make a valid will. Edward, however, insisted and, put upon their allegiance, his council all swore to uphold his wishes.

13 On 6 July the King died and Jane's eccentric claim was put to the test. Bearing in mind that it could not be treason to obey the personal commands of a king, they could have felt uncommitted and free to obey the law as it then stood. Northumberland, however, thought differently. Whether out of loyalty to his late master, or out of family interest, he persuaded (or forced) the Council to follow its oath, and Jane was duly proclaimed. The King's death was kept secret for two days (a standard precaution), and on 8 July revealed to the Mayor and Aldermen of London, who were sworn to Queen Jane. A contemporary

observer wrote: ‘The 10 of July, in the afternoon about 3 of the clocke, lady Jane was conveyed by water to the Tower of London, and there received as Queene …’14

A couple of hours later the King’s death was publicly announced, and ‘how he had ordained by his letters patent … that the lady Jane should be heire to the Crowne of England.’ The news was received in ominous silence and there were protests. It was pointed out that the King had been solely motivated by his desire to preserve his ‘godly reformation’ against the threat of Mary’s known conservatism but even that (which was true up to a point) could not move the citizens. If the largely Protestant city of London could not be persuaded to support so Godly a claimant, what chance was there in the rest of the country?

Jane’s ‘rule’ lasted just nine days. She had no time to appoint offi cers of State, 162

and the Council of Edward VI simply carried on.

15 By 12 July it was clear that Mary was 'making a power' in East Anglia and that military action against her would be necessary. Letters were sent out in Jane's name to the Commissions of the Peace, urging loyalty to the Queen, and the suppression of Mary's pretensions. In some places these letters were taken seriously but events were moving too fast. The Council's first thought was to send the Duke of Suffolk against Mary, but the Queen 'with many tears' asked that he be allowed to remain with her, so Northumberland went instead. This turned out to be a fatal mistake. Northumberland was a better soldier than Suffolk but as soon as his dominating presence was removed from London, the Council began to split. By 16 July the split had become open and Mary's adherents were in the majority. On 19 July Mary was proclaimed in London with general rejoicing and Northumberland, stuck at Cambridge with a dwindling force, was left out on a limb. The Duke of Suffolk himself took down the canopy of state under which Jane had sat, and informed her that she was no longer Queen.16 Instead, she and her father and all their adherents were prisoners. She was removed from the royal apartments to the Keeper's lodgings. The hapless girl had had no time to rule and we have no idea what sort of a job she would have made of it. She did, apparently, indicate very firmly that she had no intention of conferring the Crown Matrimonial upon her husband and if that had ever come to an issue it would have been a revolutionary move. She appears to have been a mere pawn in a power game that the Duke of Northumberland played, and lost, with Mary. What might have happened if she had been a boy is a fascinating but pointless speculation. Whichever way the issue had gone in July 1553, England would have had its first ruling Queen. As soon as Mary reached London on 3 August, the wheels of political justice began to turn. Stephen Gardiner, the Bishop of Winchester, the Duke of Norfolk and Edward Courtenay were released from the Tower. The Duke of Northumberland and his sons replaced them. In due course all were arraigned and condemned to death, although in the event only the Duke suffered.17 Two of his followers suffered with him, but the delicacy of the political balance that had brought Mary to the throne was reflected in the outcome. Jane, it is clear, was not rigorously confined. She had her servants and was allowed to move around

within the Tower. An anonymous chronicler recorded how on 29 August:

I dined at Partrige's (the Keeper) house with my lady Jane … she sitting at the bordes end … emongst our communication at dyner; this was to be noted … saythe she "The queens majesty is a mercyfull princes; I beseche God she may long continue, and sende his bountefull grace upon hir …

18

They spoke of religion and Jane asked if the mass was set up again in London. Being told that it was so, she proceeded to comment on the recent conversion of the Duke of Northumberland, 'who woulde have thought', saide she, 'that he would have done so'. She clearly had no sympathy with his predicament and proceeded to blame him bitterly for bringing 'me and our stocke in most miserable callamytye'. As she wrote to the Queen in a letter not now surviving

'… in truth I was deceived by the Duke and council, and ill-treated by my husband and his mother …' She would, she declared, in spite of her youth, never seek to save her life by any such apostasy as Northumberland had been guilty of. She was yesterday's woman but as such presented something of a problem to Mary, who was inclined to pardon her, as she confi ded to Simon Renard, the Imperial ambassador. Her father was indeed pardoned during November in a somewhat inexplicable act of clemency, considering the extent of his involvement. However, she had pretended to the throne, and the proprieties had to be observed. Consequently on 13 November she was tried at the Guildhall, along with her husband and the Archbishop of Canterbury, 'The lady Jane was in a blacke gowne of cloth, tourned down, the cappe lined with fese velvet … a blacke velvet booke hanging befor

e hir …'19

They were all, of course, condemned to die. Nevertheless, it is likely that she would have been pardoned eventually if it had not been for her father's reckless involvement in the Wyatt rebellion in January 1554. This was a dangerous protest against the Queen's plan to marry Philip of Spain, but once it had collapsed the government chose to represent it as an attempt to rescue and restore Jane to the throne. There was no desire to admit that Philip would be so unpopular, and Jane was expendable. Consequently, on 12 February she and her wretched young husband were executed as a sacrifi ce to expediency. The Queen sent the persuasive John Feckenham, the Dean of St Paul's, in an attempt to convert her to the old faith. They parted with mutual respect but without agreement. It was her powerful religious faith that enabled her to die with assurance:

‘Good people’ she said, ‘I am come hether to die, and by a lawe I am condemned to the same. The facte, in dede, against the queens highnesse was unlawfull, and the consenting thereto by me, but touching the procurement and desire thereof … I doo wash my handes in innocencie …

She then repeated the Misere, ‘and so ended’.

20

Because of her place in Protestant hagiography this scene has been often described and was a favourite with the kitsch Victorian painters of historical 164

scenes but it was an unnecessary tragedy, which brought Queen Mary no ultimate advantage. She would probably have done better to release Jane into the obscurity of a failed aristocratic marriage.

Mary of Scotland was a completely different kind of animal. None of the problematic and arbitrary thinking that had been required to create Jane's claim was necessary in her case. She represented the clear principle of undisputed legitimacy. Very little is known about her early years when her realm was in the hands of Regents and her person in the care of her mother, Mary of Guise, except that she was crowned as an infant on 9 September 1543. One thing, however, is very clear: Henry VIII wanted her as a wife for his own son, Prince Edward. There were several reasons for this but the most important was an imperial ambition to gain control over the neighbouring kingdom. Had this marriage taken effect, Mary would have been Queen Consort in England, and would have been expected to live there, while Edward would have held the Crown Matrimonial of Scotland, and would have governed the kingdom (with his wife's consent, of course) through his own appointed agents. Any child of the marriage would have had an equal claim to both countries and when the Crowns were so unifi ed the greater political and fi nancial weight of England would have guaranteed it the role of senior partner. It was this medium-and long-term threat to their independence which turned the Scots against the marriage and although they were in no position to resist after the defeat at Solway Moss, the parliament nevertheless repudiated the subsequent Treaty of Greenwich and never recognized the betrothal of the children. Henry was very angry at what he saw as a betrayal and, despite his primary concern over war with France, kept up an erratic and totally ineffective military pressure upon Scotland. These campaigns, known collectively as 'the rough wooing', served to alienate those in Scotland who had at fi rst been in favour of the union and led to a marked increase in French, and Catholic infl uence north of the border.

This orientation was confi rmed when Edward's Lord Protector, the Duke of Somerset, launched a new campaign, in accordance, he claimed, with his late master's wishes, in September 1547. The French were apparently taken by surprise, and the Scots suffered another heavy defeat at Pinkie Cleugh near Musselborough. Realizing that he

lacked the resources for a systematic conquest and unable to force the regency government to the negotiating table, Somerset dispersed his victorious army into some two dozen garrisons, from Dundee in the north-east to Dumfries in the south-west. This turned out to be useless. The garrisons could not be supplied or reinforced and were under constant guerrilla pressure, being abandoned or falling into enemy hands steadily over the following year. Scotland's plight also belatedly stirred Henry II into action,

and on 19 June 1548 a force of 10,000 French troops landed in the Firth of Forth. In August the Franco-Scottish treaty of Haddington not only tilted the military balance decisively in Scotland's favour but also killed off the treaty of Greenwich by betrothing the 5-year old Mary to the Dauphin, Francis. The same month she was smuggled out of Ayr, landing at Roscoff on 13 June and was received with open arms at the French Court. For the next ten years she was to be cosseted, educated and trained to be a French princess and sometime Queen Consort. She was not, apparently, even taught to write in English (or Scots), and certainly felt closer to her Guise kindred than to anyone in Scotland. Meanwhile her northern realm continued to be run by regents, culminating in the Queen Mother in 1554, and became increasingly disrupted by aristocratic and religious feuds. Although much infl uenced by events in England, Scotland had its own band of indigenous reformers who, in 1547 and 1548, had learned to their bitter cost the folly of looking south of the border for support. From their point of view, however, the total failure of English policy in Scotland and its virtual withdrawal by the autumn of 1549, had its own advantages. No longer thought of as being English agents, and seeking their inspiration instead directly from Geneva and Zurich, between 1550 and 1558, the Scottish Protestants made huge strides. On a level playing fi eld, the French were no more popular in Scotland than were the English, and after 1548 they were there, while the English were not. By 1558 the Protestant Lords of the Congregation of Jesus Christ were in full rebellion against the Regent and her French backers.

Meanwhile Mary had grown up tall and beautiful. An accomplished linguist, dancer, needlewoman and horsewoman, she had been given only the most perfunctory instruction as to how to run her problematic norther

n kingdom.21

It seems to have been assumed that she would remain in France, and govern Scotland through agents. On 24 April 1558, Francis and Mary were married and both Mary as Queen and Francis as King Consort swore to uphold the laws and liberties of Scotland. At the same time Francis guaranteed that, in the event of Mary dying childless, he

would not press any claim to the Scottish throne but would let it come to the next inheritors by Scots law. This was disingenuous, not to say dishonest, because three weeks before her wedding Mary had signed another instrument whereby, in the event of her dying without issue, she assigned the Crown of Scotland – and any claim which she had to the Crown of England

– to the King of France. In the event, both instruments were dead letters because Francis died fi rst, but their existence amply justifi es the suspicion with which Mary was always regarded in offi cial circles in England. When Queen Mary Tudor died on 17 November, Francis and his consort promptly added the arms and title of England to their achievement. The claim was explicit, but low key and 166

Henry II was not anxious to exploit it. When the Franco-Spanish-English war was brought to an end at Cateau Cambrecis in April 1559 he made no diffi culty about negotiating with Elizabeth as Queen of England. When Henry died, however, in a tournament accident following the signing of the treaty, his son, now Francis II, did not scruple to use the titles of all three kingdoms, irrespective of the fact that so far nobody in England had canvassed his wife's claim at all. Meanwhile the political situation in Scotland was deadlocked. Mary of Guise, with only minimal French support, was not strong enough to suppress the rebels, while they, plagued with internal quarrels, lacked the muscle or support for a complete victory. The English, having now committed themselves to the Protestant side in any future European confl ict, regarded this situation with anxiety. When one of the rebel groups approached the English council for support, the response, although cautious, was positive. William Cecil persuaded Elizabeth to intervene and the Queen in turn was at great pains to distance herself from the father's imperialist claims.

22 The intelligence of this approach was quickly demonstrated and despite a spectacular military failure at the siege of Leith in 1560, by the summer the issue had been forced to a treaty. The French position had been fatally weakened by the fact that internal dissentions in France made it virtually impossible for Francis to send reinforcements and then, in June 1560, Mary of Guise had died. By the Treaty of Edinburgh, both English and French forces were withdrawn, and Scotland was left in the hands of the Protestant Lords, who wasted no time in establishing a reformed Kirk and a council of regency. The French troops duly went home but neither Francis nor Mary ever ratifi ed the treaty, despite the fact that it remained the *de facto* basis of Anglo-Scottish relations for the next 40 years. This non-ratifi cation continued to be a bone of contention between Mary and Elizabeth, at least until Mary was detained in England. In spite of the fact that the English were ignoring her, and she them, Mary's fortunes were at their zenith in 1559–60, when she was 18. Thereafter it was downhill all the way.

The fi rst blow was the death of Francis II in December 1560. He had never been anything but a sickly youth and it is unlikely that his marriage with Mary was ever consummated. This not only left her

childless, but deeply frustrated – a frustration that was to be refl ected in some highly irresponsible behaviour within a few years. It also left her without a role in France because the powerful Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici, was bitterly opposed to the Guises. The second blow was consequently that her uncles, the Duke and Cardinal of Guise, became so preoccupied with the internal troubles of that kingdom that they had scant time or attention for their niece and began to press her to return to Scotland. They pointed out, rightly enough from their point of view, that that kingdom

had much need of its Catholic ruler. Once the 40 days of her offi cial mourning were over, there was much talk of her remarriage, both Don Carlos, Philip II's son and the Earl of Arran being mentioned, but Mary's own thoughts were turning consistently to her northern kingdom, which had been without any sort of royal government since the death of her mother. She appeared to the English ambassador in Paris, Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, to be a very competent and self-possessed young woman:

Since her husband's death the Scottish Queen has showed … that she is both of great wisdom for her years, modesty, and also of great judgement … which increasing with her years, cannot but turn greatly to her commendation …

23

Meanwhile, the Scots themselves were warming to the thought of her return, especially as she was beginning to acquire a reputation for fl exibility in matters of religion. It was Maitland of Lethington, who was keenly aware of the international dimension, and of Mary's English claim, who urged that she be invited to return, so that that claim might benefi t Scotland rather than France. As early as January 1561 she had notifi ed an intention to return. The emissaries passed to and fro and by the beginning of August a deal had been struck. On 19 August her French galleys reached the port of Leith. And Mary, at the age of 19, returned to the country of her birth, which she had not seen for 13 years. Her deal had been with Lord James Stuart, her half brother, and had included an undertaking to 'work along' with the Protestant ascendancy. Within days she had issued a proclamation protecting that ascendancy, and established a council the leading members of which were Lord James and Maitland of Lethington.

24 It was expected at fi rst that the Queen would be little more than a fi gurehead, but she soon began to demonstrate an unexpected intelligence and grasp of politics. Her willingness to work with a Protestant council had largely marginalized the fi ery John Knox and when she confronted him in a number of disputations, although his intransigence reduced her to tears, he gained no political advantage

thereby. At first, as Mary quickly realized, the Anglo-Scottish amity of 1560 was fundamental and she was happy to retain that for reasons of her own. Her eyes were fixed on the English succession. This was not an immediate issue, because although she never withdrew her alternative claim, Elizabeth was a young woman not much older than herself. Mary's intention was not to replace Elizabeth (least of all as a Catholic claimant), but to obtain an official recognition of her position as heir should the Queen die childless. In this she made no progress at all. Elizabeth refused even to discuss the issue of the succession, and when she was seriously ill in 1562 it quickly transpired that Mary had no backing in the English Council.

Meanwhile, the Scottish Queen was proving as energetic as she was sensible. Between 1562 and 1564 she undertook numerous progresses, going to the Catholic stronghold of the north east in 1562 and getting as far as Inverness in 1564, where the court donned highland dress in honour of the place! The Gordons were so alienated by her pro-Protestant policies that the Earl of Huntly staged a smallscale rebellion during the 1562 progress, which only served to demonstrate the weakness of his following. He died (apparently of apoplexy) on the fi eld of

battle.25

Lord James Stuart became Earl of Moray and the Huntly title was temporarily extinguished. The Anglo-Scottish amity was put under some strain, not only by Mary's persistence over the succession issue but also by the failure of a planned joint initiative in Ulster involving the Earl of Argyll. However, that failure was largely William Cecil's fault and the amity still held into 1565.

26 At that point it was seriously disrupted by Mary's need for a man. A widowed Queen, young and beautiful, was an inevitable subject for matrimonial speculation and all sorts of suitors were canvassed, including Eric of Sweden, who had failed with Elizabeth and had no desire to try again. Much more serious, particularly in its political implications, was the proposal of Don Carlos, Philip's somewhat unpromising son. By 1563 Anglo-Spanish relations were coming under strain and the prospect was regarded in England with undisguised alarm. So exercised was she that Elizabeth decided to take an initiative with the 'good sister' and offered her the hand of Lord Robert Dudley. By the time that this happened the English Queen had abandoned any intention of marrying Lord Robert herself, but he was still unquestionably her favourite and the question of her sincerity in making this offer has often been discussed.27 Was she trying to do the best that she could for a man that she loved, but would never have? Or was she trying to establish a vicarious control over the Queen of Scots? Perhaps it was a bit of both. In any case Mary was not amused at being offered Elizabeth's 'cast off lover', even when he was created Earl of Leicester in 1564.

At this point, however, Mary's shrewdness and political judgement,

both of which had been much in evidence since her return to the north, appear to have deserted her completely. As a result of the manoeuvrings of Scottish aristocratic politics, and a dash of English intercession, the exiled Earl of Lennox returned to Scotland in September 1564 and was restored to the title that he had forfeited in 1545, on 4 October. Lennox's countess was Margaret, the daughter of Eleanor, the younger sister of Frances Brandon, Duchess of Suffolk, and thus had a remote claim to the English throne. Both Eleanor and Frances were dead by 1564, and although Mary Tudor had taken Margaret's claim seriously, Elizabeth and her council had never done so. However, the Lennoxes had a son, the 18-year-old Henry, Lord Darnley, and he was the only male with even a remote claim by that

time. Darnley joined his father in Scotland in January 1565 and shortly after met the Queen. He was, apparently, a ‘long lad’, boy

ish but tall and handsome.28 Mary fell head-over-heels in love with him, and all her hard-earned common sense went out of the window. There was soon talk of marriage and the alarm bells began to ring in England. Darnley professed to be a Protestant, but his mother was a notorious Catholic (which was why Mary had approved of her) and his claim to the throne made him dangerous. If they should wed, two quite different claims would be united. It has been argued that, having rejected Dudley, there was no realistic alternative if Mary was determined on marriage but in fact she could have had her pick of the princely houses of Europe – even those currently pursuing Elizabeth. The fact is that she wanted him. Darnley was created Earl of Ross on 15 May 1565 and on 29 July Mary married him. He was proclaimed King the same day.

The dispensation that the rules of the Catholic Church demanded did not arrive until September and Elizabeth was completely alienated: ‘All their sisterly familiarity was ceased…’ as one contemporary put it.

29 There were even rumours of war.

Even at this early stage, Darnley was not a popular choice in Scotland but the prevailing attitude was ‘wait and see’. The minor rebellion known as the Chaseabout Raid in September was premature and resulted only in the fl ight to England of the earls of Arran and Moray on 6 October. Meanwhile, Mary’s primary need had been satisfi ed because within a couple of months or so of her wedding she was pregnant. The Queen’s little weakness had been spotted, or presumed, as early as 1562, when in the course of her progress, she had been handed a ‘lewd bill’, which left nothing to the imagination. Elizabeth’s reaction to such presumption can only be imagined! The price that Mary paid for that gratifi cation, however, was high. The rupture with England remained at the diplomatic level but the Chaseabout raid left her with the need for a new Council and that saw the rise of David Rizzio. Rizzio was never a member of the council, but his appointment as French secretary gave him infl uence – and access. By October the

Queen's brief honeymoon with Darnley was over – a sure sign of its unstable foundation. He swiftly confi rmed what many had realized before: that he was both vain and stupid and had a unique talent for upsetting everyone. That included the Queen, who by the end of October had refused him the Crown Matrimonial, which left him with only the empty title of King and a monumental gr

udge.30 Whether it was Darnley's behaviour or some other factor, Mary seems to have been thrown completely off balance by these events. By January 1566

she had abandoned plans to conciliate the exiles in England and bring them home. Instead she called a parliament for the express purpose of forfeiting them 170

and at the same time turned against the Protestant establishment with a plan to legalize the mass. The alarm that these moves created led to a plot against her, to which Darnley was recruited by a promise of the Crown Matrimonial. The plotters clearly intended to seize power but whether they aimed to replace Mary with Darnley seems much more problematical. On Saturday 9 March 1566 they invaded the royal apartments, seized the unsuspecting (and ill-protected) Queen, and they murdered David Rizzio. Rizzio was not the main target, but he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Mary was imprisoned and the parliament dismissed without having pronounced either on the forfeitures or the mass. The Queen was accused of listening to evil council, but whatever the plotters aim may have been it was quickly frustrated by her escape. With the aid of the Earl of Bothwell, she got away to Dunbar and swiftly raised an army, which swept her back to power. The plot had been only skin deep in terms of support, and the plotters (except Darnley) now fl ed in their turn. Their action, however, had not been entirely in vain, because the Queen did, in fact, pardon and recall the earlier exiles and no further attempt was made to legalize the mass. It was in the interval of calm following these events that Prince James was born on 19 June. The labour was diffi cult. Mary only recovered slowly, and was then ill again in October. It was November before she was fully operational again, and in a position to tackle the thorniest problem of all – what to do about Darnley?

Despite Rizzio's murder and her own rough handling, she seems to have decided to write off the events of the spring, perhaps as the only way of resolving the issue of her husband. Divorce was out of the question, and annulment would have jeopardized their child, so conciliation was in the air. Joseph Rizzio was appointed to his brother's former position, and on 24 December the March plotters were pardoned.

31 Religion seems not to have been an issue, although James was baptized on 17 December with full Catholic rites, a ceremony from which Darnley, most of the Scots Lords and the English ambassador conspicuously absented themselves. There was, however, another possible way to deal with Darnley. A conspiracy of some kind existed by the end of November, and then on 10 February 1567 he was

spectacularly blown up at Kirk o' Fields. James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, the same man who had supported Mary the previous year, is generally held to have been responsible. Mary's complicity is reasonably certain, although she may not have known that the plot extended to murder. There was an immediate and vociferous outcry, which owed nothing to Darnley's popularity, and he suddenly became a cause. In this crisis, Mary's wit and good sense seem to have deserted her again, leaving her a political and emotional wreck. Bothwell was duly tried on 12 April and acquitted by a rigged court, an event that did nothing to placate the furore. The Earl's intention seems to have been clear. He wanted

to marry the Queen, and had hastily divorced his existing wife for the purpose. He tried to raise some support for such a project but made little progress and the Queen, with a last fl icker of good sense, rejected him. So fragile was Mary's security, however, that he was able to kidnap her as she returned from Stirling to Edinburgh on 24 April, and he then proceeded to rape her. There is, it has been asserted, no evidence of love on her part, nor of any kind of collusion, but if collusion did not precede the fact, it certainly followed it. On 6 May she returned with Bothwell to Edinburgh, on 15 May proceeded to marry him with Protestant rites. One contemporary observed that 'the Queen could not but marry him, seeing he had ravished her and lain with her against her will …'

32 but it is hard to imagine Elizabeth being so supine if such an unthinkable event had occurred in England. Mary was ill, and understandably deeply distressed but she had now dug herself into a political hole from which there could be no escape. A powerful confederacy of outraged lords now combined against her and Bothwell. Even her loyal Catholic familiars were alienated by the circumstances of her marriage. Their pretext was to avenge Darnley, but their real purpose was to get rid of the Queen. She was defeated at Carberry Hill early in June, and Bothwell was allowed to withdraw into exile, making nonsense of the original reason given for their action. Mary, in a state of virtual collapse, was captured and taken to Edinburgh. The confederates then declared that their main purpose was to uphold Protestantism, and on 16 June they removed the Queen to Lochleven castle, where on 24 June she was forced to abdicate in favour of her year-old son. 33 Soon after she miscarried of twins, clearly the result of her enforced intercourse with Bothwell, and was for several weeks extremely ill. She would probably have been executed out of hand if it had not been for the fact that the English Council, with whom the confederates were clearly in close touch, had not interceded on her behalf. Emotions were running high in Scotland at that point and there was precious little sympathy for Mary – now an ex-Queen and seen by most as a fallen woman. However, although her judgement appears to have deserted her completely by this time, her courage and resilience remained unimpaired. Despite all that she

had been through, she was still only 25, and remarkably tough. Through the winter of 1567–8 she gradually recovered, physically if not emotionally, and with the aid of a few loyal followers escaped from Lochleven Castle on 2 May 1568, and headed for Dumbarton, a stronghold of the sympathetic Earl of Argyll. Now that Bothwell was out of reach, it appears to have been the confederates intention to justify her continued imprisonment by charging her, belatedly, with the murder of Lord Darnley. However, her escape brought a temporary end to any such intention. Mary was not without supporters, from the Earl of Argyll to the countrymen who cheered

her as she made her way to the south-west, but it soon transpired that they were not enough. When they were worsted in a brief and almost bloodless encounter at Langside on 13 May, Mary (rather uncharacteristically) panicked and fl ed due south – over the Solway and into England. At fi rst Elizabeth appeared to be supportive. She had a very low opinion of Mary's behaviour since the early part of 1565 – behaviour that she attributed (probably correctly) to a female weakness that the English Queen was only too familiar with, but always contrived to conquer. However, Mary was an anointed Queen and her abdication had clearly been enforced. Elizabeth therefore set out initially to negotiate her restoration in Scotland, on suitable terms and co

nditions.34 Whether the Scots Queen herself would have found those conditions acceptable is highly problematic but, in any case, the Earl of Moray, now regent for the young James VI, would have none of them. Instead he caused the Casket letters to be concocted and sent into England as evidence of the Queen's complicity in her husband's death. The English Council was not convinced, and in any case its competence to judge in such a case was questionable. Mary's fate was a political matter, which could not be decided judicially. Elizabeth had three options. Either she could use her political and military weight to enforce Mary's restoration, which would have meant an end to the Anglo-Scottish amity; or she could let her withdraw to France, where she would have been welcome personally, but not politically; or she could keep her in England on one pretext or another. After a good deal of dithering, she decided on the last option, and laid up a store of trouble for herself in the process.

It has been rightly pointed out that for several years Mary's situation was that of house arrest rather than imprisonment. She had substantial revenues from her jointure as Queen Dowager of France and a household of about 40 persons for which she paid, including a confessor and a secretary. She also had a Council, which operated in France under the leadership of James Betoun, the exiled Archbishop of Glasgow. The Queen herself, however, saw her position as one of durance. She was moved from Bolton castle to Tutbury in Staffordshire late in 1569, to avoid any possible intention by the northern rebels to free her, and from Tutbury to Sheffi eld in 1570,

where she was to spend the next 14 years under the watchful eye of the Earl of Shrewsbury. When the move from Bolton to Tutbury was proposed, she declared that she would have to be ‘bound hand and foot’ to make such a frightful journey in the middle of winter. Nevertheless – she went. In view of her later reputation as a Catholic martyr it is interesting to notice that her religious practice during her captivity was nothing if not ambiguous. Mass was said privately for her by her confessor, but she regularly attended Protestant services, and for several years after her Protestant wedding in 1567 was

non grata in Rome. Most, but by no means all of her servants were Catholics and it seemed for some time that her conversion was a distinct possibility. Mary's own policy for coping with her situation was by no means consistent. On the one hand she professed friendship with Elizabeth and denied any intention of harming her but on the other hand she looked increasingly for Spanish support, and became involved in plots that were aimed at her 'good sister's' life. In 1570

and 1571 she inclined with some enthusiasm to the plan to marry her to the Duke of Norfolk. Norfolk, although confused, was not a Catholic and such a marriage would probably have involved her conversion, but as the Protestant Duchess of Norfolk her position in respect of the English succession would (she believed) have been greatly strengthened. In fact Elizabeth was vehemently opposed to the whole idea, and the Ridolfi Plot muddied the waters irredeemably.

35 Norfolk was executed for treason and Mary's status as a security risk was greatly enhanced. At the same time, Mary's prospects of an eventual return to Scotland were withering away. There had from the time of her fl ight been a residual party in her homeland committed to her restoration. When the Regent, the Earl of Moray, died in 1570, the Earl of Argyll and the Hamiltons briefl y made common cause for that purpose, but their alliance lasted less than a year before Argyll pulled out. The casualty rate among regents was high. The Earl of Lennox was killed in a skirmish in 1571 and his successor, the Earl of Mar, died in 1572. This left James Douglas, Earl of Morton in control, and Morton was strongly pro-English. The unsettled conditions produced by the rapid turn over of governors between 1570 and 1572 brought some of Mary's supporters out into the open in what was a *de facto* rebellion. They seized Edinburgh Castle but that was the limit of their success and when the regent was able to call upon English artillery to bombard the castle in 1573, they were forced to surrender. In 1579 there was a brief fl utter of returning hope. James was now 13 and his personal preferences were beginning to matter. At that point his preference was for his French kinsman, Esme Stuart, who became Earl of Lennox in 1580 and Duke in 1581. Esme's rise signalled the downfall of Regent Morton, who was overthrown in 1580 and

executed in 1581. The English Council was briefl y exercised about the possibility of a revival of French infl uence in Scotland, and Mary became optimistic. However Henry III had no desire to destabilize his delicate relations with Elizabeth. The Guises began a new round of intrigues with Mary's agents in France but before they could come to anything a group of Protestant lords seized control of the young King of Scots and arrested a number of Lennox supporters. The Duke himself fl ed to France and the last chance of there being a role for Mary in Scotland disappeared. The Earl of Shrewsbury was vigilant to prevent unauthorized access to Mary but he made no attempt to prevent her from communication with the outside 174

world and she conducted a series of restless and futile intrigues with her supporters, mainly in France but also to some extent in England. The Earl moved her around his residences for reasons of convenience and hygiene but she never went far from Sheffi eld, except for periodic visits to Buxton to take the waters. This was fashionable as well as therapeutic and she may well have conducted unauthorized discussions there. The Council feared that, but took no effective attempts to stop it. Meanwhile her constant attempts to earn by good conduct the ultimate prize of recognition as Elizabeth's heir made no progress at all. Since the Ridolfi plot William Cecil (now Lord Burghley), the Queen's senior adviser, was particularly strong in his opposition. The Anglo-French treaty of Blois (1572) held fi rm through the 1570s, and Mary at last realized that this cut off any chance of substantial aid from France – as distinct from a little surreptitious encouragement – so in 1580 she set out in a radically new direction. Through her agent in Paris, she offered to place herself, her realm and her son, under the protection of the King of

Spain.36 At the same time she reaffi rmed her Catholicism and repaired her damaged fences in Rome. The cause of the catholic Church, both in England and in Scotland, was the cause of Spain. Philip himself was cautious and non-committal but his agent in England, Bernardino de Mendoza, was enthusiastic and a new round of intrigues began, not this time involving the succession but rather Elizabeth's removal by a combination of a large-scale Catholic rising and substantial Spanish military support. As neither of these conditions was likely to be satisfi ed, all these plots have an air of unreality about them and how much Mary herself knew of them is uncertain. Whatever she knew, she was playing a double game because on the one hand she was writing to Elizabeth about the possibility of a condominium in Scotland, which, she argued, would secure French and Spanish recognition for James and, on the other hand, she had written to Philip in October 1581 proposing that James be sent to Spain while she returned to Scotland on the back of a Spanish army. By this time, it seems clear that her professions of friendship for Elizabeth were worthless and that her own grasp of political reality was wearing distinctly thin. At about the same time that Mary was writing to the King of Spain, the Duke of Guise was spinning another web of intrigue with the assistance of Mendoza. This

time the foreign invasion was to be mounted by the Guise party with Spanish fi nancial backing and was heavily dependent upon the Catholic network in England, which a young man by the name of Francis Throgmorton claimed to be able to mobilize. The object was ostensibly to be Catholic toleration but in reality it was regime change. Mary knew of these intrigues and their real purpose but was not deeply involved. Philip appears to have known nothing about it. The threat was not serious. As Holinshed pointed out, ‘there wanted two things, money and

the assistance of a convenient party in England to join with the foreign forces.

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Throgmorton’s network was real enough but quite inadequate for his purpose. The main consequences of the plot, apart from the execution of Throgmorton, were the expulsion of Mendoza in 1584 and the convincing demonstration that had been given of the effectiveness of Walsingham’s ‘anti-terrorist’ system. There was insuffi cient evidence to proceed against Mary but suspicion of her intentions had been jacked up another notch. A less direct consequence was something of a panic about the succession, because the more of these plots there were, the more likely it was that one of them would eventually succeed. A Bond of Association was drawn up in 1584 and signed by over a thousand gentlemen, committing themselves never to accept anyone on the throne in whose name the present queen had been made away. Mary was not named but the target was obvious. Then in 1585 Parliament passed an Act ‘for … the surety of the Queen most Royal Person’, which not only gave legal status to the Bond of Association but laid down detailed procedures as to how the guilty parties were to be dealt with. It was under the terms of that statute that Mary was shortly to be tried.

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The Queen of Scots seemed to be quite incapable of learning from her own mistakes. She had got away with a marginal involvement in the Throgmorton plot, partly for lack of fi rm evidence but rather more because there was no obvious law under which she might be tried and no certainty that any court in England had jurisdiction over her. The statute of 1585 supplied both those defects but in spite of knowing that perfectly well and professing a desire to retire altogether from the political arena it was not long before she was up to her eyes in another plot. In January 1585 the Earl of Shrewsbury was relieved of his charge, and Mary was moved from Sheffi eld back to Tutbury, this time in the custody of Sir Amyas Paulet. Paulet was a puritan, and soon proved to be an exceptionally zealous guardian. In December of

the same year he moved his charge to the nearby manor of Chartley and deliberately deceived her into believing that she had discovered a way to correspond that evaded his vigilanc

e.39

Nothing could have been further from the truth, and the next time a plot was being hatched, Paulet and Walsingham made certain that she walked right into the trap. The scenario was familiar. Mendoza, the Guises and Mary's French agents were plotting in Paris what was virtually a re-run of the Throgmorton conspiracy, only this time the English agent was a young man named Anthony Babington. Babington was a former servant of Mary's, and appears to have been quite bowled over by her charms. He was also far more zealous than discreet and on 6 July 1586 wrote her a highly explicit letter, seeking her approval for another assassination attempt against Elizabeth. This letter fell into Walsingham's hands and he read it before she did. Altogether this was a very leaky conspiracy because 176

another of the plotters, a priest named Ballard, was already in custody and had made damaging allegations, so Babington was a marked man. Then on 17 July the unsuspecting Mary replied to Babington, explicitly approving his scheme and giving him various advice as to how to set about the task. Walsingham, of course, read the letter. He now had the evidence which he needed, but still faced the daunting task of persuading the Queen to act. However, circumstances had changed since 1584. England was now at war and Mary had exposed herself to the charge of being a Spanish agent; even Elizabeth could not ignore so blatant a threat. Had not William of Orange fallen to just such an assassin's bullet two years earlier?

This combination of pressures forced the Queen to act. In October 1586 she set up a commission to try her cousin and notifi ed her of the intention: Whereas we are given to understand that you, to our great and inestimable grief, as one void of all remorse of conscience, pretend with great protestations not to be in any sort privy or assenting to any attempt either against our state or person, forasmuch as we fi nd by most clear and evident proof that the contrary will be verifi ed and maintained against you …

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She had authorized the commissioners to proceed to trial. Mary did not attempt to challenge the jurisdiction of the court but instead adopted the futile expedient of protesting her innocence. However, even her own secretaries testifi ed against her. Elizabeth knew perfectly well that compassing the death of a heretic would incur no censure from the Catholic Church, but she still insisted on conferring with the commissioners before they delivered their verdict. On 4 December her guilt was proclaimed in accordance with the terms of the 1585 Act, and James was reassured that his mother's exclusion from the English throne did not affect his ow

n claim.41 As a result very largely of her own folly, all Mary's schemes for the English Crown or succession, which had occupied her for quarter of a century, had now come to nothing and her life was on the line. Elizabeth, for reasons that are entirely creditable in humane terms, was most reluctant to see the woman who had professed to be her 'most dear sister' suffer on the scaffold. On the other hand, she

was now convinced of Mary's treachery and her councillors, aware of her reluctance, stirred rumours of new plots. At length she was convinced. 'Aut fer, aut feri; ne feriare feri' (suffer or strike; strike in order not to be stricken), she is alleged to have said, and signed the death warrant on 1 February 1587. Mary was executed on the morning of 8 February, making her exit with far more theatrical fl air and dignity than she had lived. Despite her dubious relations with the Church, she presented herself as a Catholic martyr and as such was accepted by subsequent Catholic historiography. She died at Fotheringhay, where she had

been tried, and was buried in nearby Peterborough Cathedral. James professed great sorrow and indignation but he did not allow either to disrupt his developing relationship with Elizabeth. After all, he had not seen his mother since he was a baby. What he did do years later in 1612, was to have her remains moved from Peterborough to Westminster Abbey – as though she had been Queen indeed. Mary was unique. She was Queen of Scotland effectively only from 1561 to 1567 and, after a good start, made a catastrophic mess of her responsibilities. Before 1561, although she bore the title, she was little more than a fi gurehead and after 1568 she was an exile and a prisoner. For the six years of her reign when she was in Scotland she was a serious political rival to Elizabeth but, after her marriage to Darnley, her position disintegrated. In fact she fell into the trap that Elizabeth narrowly avoided, of allowing her physical and emotional needs to take precedence over the political demands of her position. This worked both positively, in her marriage to Darnley, and negatively in her involvement in his murder. Despite her intelligence and shrewdness she behaved as a woman rather than as a queen. After 1568, if she had converted to Protestantism and had come to terms with the English Council, she might have been recognized as heir. On the other hand if she had been a different kind of woman she might have ended her days as Queen of Scotland and England would not have been troubled with her. Eventually she drifted into the position of being the Catholic pretender and

– given the way in which English opinion was moving – particularly after 1570

– that was a formula for failure. In the context of this study, she is an admirable foil for Elizabeth. Scotland's misfortune was England's gain.

7. Anne Boleyn by Unknown artist (National Portrait Gallery, London)

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8. Jane Seymour by Hans Holbein the Younger

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9. Catherine Parr by Unknown artist (National Portrait Gallery, London)

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10. Unknown woman, formerly known as Catherine Howard after Hans Holbein the Younger (National Portrait Gallery, London)

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11. Lady Jane Dudley (née Grey) by Unknown artist (National Portrait Gallery, London)

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12. Mary Queen of Scots by Unknown artist

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13. Queen Mary I by Hans Eworth (National Portrait Gallery, London)

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14. Queen Elizabeth I attributed to George Gower (National Portrait Gallery, London)

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The Married Sovereign: Queen Mary I

In July 1553 Henry VIII's earth-moving efforts to prevent a female succession were fi nally brought to nothing. When his only surviving son died without achieving his majority there was no man with a respectable claim in sight.

1

Henry had provided against such an eventuality both in his last succession Act and in his will, decreeing that in the event of both himself and his son dying without further heirs the Crown was to pass to his elder daughter, Mary. It was, of course, hoped that this would not arise. As we have seen, Edward tried to divert the succession away from Mary but since his chosen candidate was also female and with an inferior claim the attempt made on his behalf after his death was unsuccessful. On 19 July Mary was proclaimed and, as her reign was offi cially dated from the time of Edward's death, Jane was erased from the record. Mary, although passionately convinced of her right to succeed, was only too aware of the problems that she faced. As the Church taught, custom decreed, and everyone believed, women were naturally inferior to men and it was their destiny to be ruled and not to rule. In her youth, a girl was controlled by her father, or by some male surrogate; when she married, she passed under the authority of her husband and as a widow she was 'protected' by her sons. Of course many women did not fi t into these tidy categories. There were unmarried heiresses whose fathers had died; spinsters who were not heiresses; and widows without offspring. It was among such unattached women, as well as among those families where the number of daughters outran the parental capacity to provide dowries, that the religious houses had carried out their main recruitment. Mary, however, even at the time of her deepest affl iction, had been no more inclined than her mother to take the veil. Both were far too keenly aware of their royal credentials to wish to exchange them, even for the kingdom of heaven.

Mary had enjoyed a happy childhood and had seen a great deal more of both her parents than was normal with royal offspring of the period. Her education was carefully planned in the Renaissance mode, with much emphasis upon biblical and classical reading but it had been a girl's education, designed to make her a fi t companion for a great king and a mother to his children. It was not designed to make her a ruler of men. For Henry to have brought up his 188

daughter for that purpose would have been an admission of defeat that he was not prepared to countenance. Catherine needed to look no further for a model than her own upbringing, which had likewise been learned, and feminine. Juan Vives, to whom her mother had turned for advice, and who was an advocate of women's education, designed his scheme for a girl's supposedly inferior capacity and conscientiously steered clear of both lechery and politics.

2 How much Mary knew of her parents' marital problems while she was in Wales we do not know but it is reasonable to suppose that the Countess of Salisbury protected her against the salacious gossip that focused on Anne Boleyn before 1529. When she came back from the Marches in the latter year and walked into the storm she was already 13 and no longer a child by the standards of the time. She had been twice betrothed and twice abandoned but it is unlikely that these essentially political games had had much impact on her personally. The independent household that she had enjoyed in Wales continued and, although she spent quite a lot of time with her mother, the Countess of Salisbury continued in post, and Mary was, in theory at least, very much her own mistress. However, during the sensitive adolescent years between 13 and 16, she became a very partisan spectator of the 'sex war' going on between her father and her mother and when the whole situation exploded in 1533 she was very much in the fi ring line. When she furiously declined to be termed 'The Lady Mary' her whole establishment was closed down and she found herself under virtual arrest in the household set up for her supplanter, Elizabeth. Her formal education had in any case ceased by that time and she was left to draw what consolation she could from the piety and classical learning that she had absorbed

Her mother's death in January 1536 dealt her a severe blow and worse was to follow in May, when she discovered that the shameful ways in which she had been treated sprang not from the infl uence of Anne Boleyn but from her father's own political and ecclesiastical convictions. Undermined by this discovery, she surrendered to his will in July 1536, and was immediately restored to favour becoming 'the second lady of the court' after Queen Jane Seymour.

3 Over the next 11 years, as queens came and went, she ran her own household, living partly at court and partly in one or other of the

royal residences in the Home Counties. Marriage proposals were mooted from time to time and she even met one of her suitors but despite her diminished offi cial status, her marriage was primarily a political issue over which she had (and could expect to have) very little control. She is said to have lamented at one point that as long as her father was alive she would never be wed, but would remain ‘only the Lady Mary, and the most unhappy lady in Christendom’.4 What Mary really thought, either about this or about anything else, during these years is extremely hard

to reconstruct. Her subsequent conduct suggests that she was dissembling and remained secretly a committed papist – but no contemporary evidence shows this. It would, of course, have been a very dangerous line to have taken, but even her warmest admirer, Eustace Chapuys, does not give any hint that that was what was happening. Indeed he seems to have been totally puzzled by her attitude. She quarrelled with Catherine Howard – a girls' spat over jewels and precedence – but was warm friends with both Jane Seymour and Catherine Parr. She remained devoted to the liturgies and practices of the old faith – but then so did her father so there was no basis for disagreement there.

She must have realized that her views were seriously at odds with those of Henry's last queen and her circle but that does not seem to have impaired their friendship and indeed there is at this stage no sign of her later reputation for intolerance and bigotry. She was living in Catherine's household with every sign of contentment when Henry died.

As we have seen, she made no bid for the succession at that point, being apparently quite satisfi ed with her lawful position of 'second person'. However, in other ways the King's death transformed her circumstances. Henry was hardly buried before Lord Thomas Seymour resumed his attentions to Catherine, who obviously found them welcome. Feeling ill at ease in this love nest, Mary moved out. Her father had bequeathed her lands to the value of some £4,000 a year and several houses including two of her favourites, Hunsdon and Beaulieu or New Hall. This made her for the fi rst time, not only fully independent, but a magnate in her own right, and the Council made haste to confi rm the arrangements and formalize the gr

ants.5 Mary now needed not only household offi cers but Stewards and Receivers for her manors and a council of lawyers and advisors. She was 31 years old and her unmarried state was an anomaly but at least it gave her invaluable experience in management. For about four years, until her half sister Elizabeth was similarly endowed in 1551, she was the only woman who could be classed as a major peer in her own right. She held no title or public offi ce and did not sit in the House of Lords, but in other respects she was a Prince of the Blood.

She denied any intention of meddling in the politics of her brother's reign and declined any role in the conspiracy that overthrew Protector Somerset in October 1549 but in one critical respect she made a highly political statement. On the ground that it offended her conscience she absolutely refused to use or countenance the use of the Book of Common Prayer. 6 Furious quarrels and ruthless pressure from the Council, both under Somerset and under his successor, John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, could not budge her. Her father's settlement, she declared, was absolute and fi nal, and could not be touched – least of all while the King was a minor.

Not only was this defi ance highly embarrassing to the Council – it also put relations with the Emperor into the freezer. Charles had been mystifi ed by Mary's apparent quiescence in the latter years of her father's reign but this stand he understood, and supported to the hilt, threatening war if the law was enforced upon his cousin.

7 Whether he would (or could) have gone so far is uncertain, but the minority Council could not afford to take the risk. Stalemate ensued. By 1553 Mary was thus not only an experienced manager in terms of her estates, and the patronage which went with wealth and status, but she was also in this particular respect a political leader. All those (and they were very numerous) who found Edward's religious settlement unappealing, and who hankered after

'religion as king Henry left it', looked to her as their standard bearer and leader. In spite of her almost hysterical exchanges with the council, she had proved extraordinarily tough and shrewd in her campaign against the Prayer Book, and had used her status quite ruthlessly to expose the weaknesses and limitations of Edward's government. In the light of this, and of her quarrel with the King that had resulted, it is not surprising, that as his death approached in the summer of 1553, the young Edward should have become fully convinced that her succession to the Crown would be a disaster.

As we have seen, he tried to will the throne to his young cousin, Jane Dudley, and for a few days everyone thought that the 'King's party' would prevail. However, within about a fortnight it had turned out to be no contest. In the fi rst place, Mary was ready for a fi ght because she knew about the conspiracy against her, and believed passionately in the rightness of her cause. Her servants had written out numerous copies of her proclamation of accession and the gentlemen of her retinue had mobilized their friends and put their own retainers on standby. When the moment came and she was fully convinced that her brother was dead, the machinery immediately went into action. Within days her proclamations were being read all over the country, and a sizeable military force began to assemble at Kenninghall in Norfolk, in the heart of her own estates.

8 By contrast, the Duke of Northumberland was not prepared. His theoretical command of resources depended upon men whose primary

allegiance was elsewhere. Some were the King's men, and their loyalty in such a crisis was uncertain. Some were dependent upon his fellow councillors, and would remain loyal only as long as their masters did. His own *manred*, when it came to the point, was pitifully small. He was a great man, with commensurate wealth, but his estates were in constant fl ux, producing no large body of committed tenants and followers. Consequently, he could not count on nearly as many loyal supporters as Mary could. Added to which, his action was of dubious legality, whereas Mary was supported both by statute and the old King's will. Even the Protestants, who with the benefi t of hindsight can

be seen to have had the most to lose, on the whole declared for her. When the majority of the Council deserted him, between 16 and 19 July 1553, taking their men with them, Northumberland was left with a rump retinue, which was no match for Mary's large and increasing forces, and he gave up. Robert Wingfi eld recorded the whole of Mary's triumph and although his account is replete with hagiography and special pleading, the outline of the story that he tells is accurate enough.

9 Mary moved her base from Kenninghall to Framlingham on 12 July, was proclaimed in London on 19 July and then advanced steadily on the capital, sweeping up further peers and former councillors as she advanced. She entered London in triumph, to universal acclamation, on 3 August.

Five years later she died, if not quite unlamented, certainly much less popular than at the time of her triumph. So what went wrong and to what extent can her failure be blamed on the fact that she was England's fi rst ruling Queen? Neither Mary nor her subjects had any doubt of her right to the throne. To some she was the old King's only legitimate child but to most she was his heir by law established and her known commitment to the old faith was no handicap at all. Edward's Protestant government had been remarkably effective but it had never been popular except in parts of London and the Home Counties. What most expected their new Queen to do was to restore her father's settlement. That, after all, had been the slogan under which she had campaigned against the Prayer Book. However, Mary's particular brand of piety led her to ascribe her success against the Duke of Northumberland to direct Divine intervention. Those Englishmen, nobles, gentlemen and others, who had been the effective cause of that success, had been merely acting as the agents of the Will of God. This meant that she believed herself to have a Divine mandate to right all the wrongs of the previous 20 years and that she had been deliberately preserved by God in all her troubles for precisely that pur

pose.10 So God had intended her to succeed to the Crown, but God had also created her as a woman with all that it implied in contemporary perceptions. On the one hand, executive responsibility was now hers – given directly by God – but on the other hand she was

naturally created to be ruled by men. There is no evidence that Mary pondered these matters deeply but her instincts did sometimes lead her in contradictory directions. On the one hand she told her council and the Imperial ambassadors that she intended to restore the Pope's authority; on the other hand she issued a conciliatory proclamation, indicating her intention to make a religious settlement in Parliament, as both her father and her brother had done. 11 When her much admired kinsman, Reginald, Cardinal Pole, wrote to warn her against repealing statutes that had been *ultra vires* in their creation, she paid no attention. At fi rst, this worked well enough, and corresponded with the general expectation. Her fi rst parliament repealed 192

Edward's ecclesiastical statutes, and returned the Church to the situation that King Henry had left, with the mass and all the traditional ceremonies back in place but still subject to the Royal Supremacy. 'The Queen's Godly proceedings', as they were known in conservative circles, were widely popular

.12 Leading Protestants were either arrested or fl ed into exile and the Queen clearly won this round by a large points margin.

With her council she was less successful, largely because her experience of affairs was confi ned to running a private estate. Despite having been close to the politics of her brother's reign, she had no executive training whatsoever, both because of her gender and because of her religious stand. Her fi rst and most natural instinct was to cling to those whom she knew and trusted – men like her controller, Robert Rochester, or Sir Francis Englefi eld, and they formed her initial Privy Council, which met for the fi rst time on 8 July. Unfortunately, although the loyalty and Catholicism of these men was exemplary, they had no more experience of high politics than their mistress. In short, they were quite unsuited to be a monarch's council. To her credit, Mary realized this quite well and knew that she would have to recruit from among the experienced councillors who had only recently signed a letter urging obedience to Queen Jane. She did this pragmatically, and roughly in accordance with the speed with which they had abandoned Northumberland when the tide turned against him. By the time that she reached London, therefore, she already had a large and heterogeneous council, to which she then added three victims of the previous regime, Stephen Gardiner, the Duke of Norfolk and Cuthbert Tunstall. Gardiner was a valuable acquisition, who rapidly became Lord Chancellor, but the other two were very elderly, and were recruited largely for nostalgic reasons. By the end of August, her Council numbered nearly 50 and she had in effect gone back to the older, more amorphous type of council that had preceded the reforms of 1540. This was a retrograde step in every sense of that word. What she should have done at this stage was to drop most (if not all) of the 'Framlingham' council – and never appoint Tunstall and Norfolk. However her affection for councillors such as Rochester and Englefi eld was out of proportion to their usefulness and what happened was that the council broke up into

‘factions’, with the old councillors accusing the new of disloyalty, and the new accusing the old of being out of touch.

Added to this problem was the fact that the Queen never really trusted her new councillors, who were without exception compromised by their support for the regimes of either Edward or the later Henry. Even Stephen Gardiner, despite his exalted position and his opposition to Edward, was contaminated by his earlier support for the royal supremacy. Whether this lack of trust was in

any way connected with her gender is uncertain – a man might have behaved similarly – but it was seen at the time as female indecision and emotionalism. This lack of confi dence was immediately accentuated by the debate over the Queen's marriage. Had Mary been a king this would have been an important but essentially secondary issue, mainly inspired by considerations of the foreign policy implications of any such match. However, because she was a woman, it became an intense debate over who was fi t to wear the Crown Matrimonial and share the government with her. The Queen was 37 and if there was to be a child of the marriage it would have to happen very soon. That was the purpose that was in the front of everyone's mind (including Mary's) but it was not the only concern. England had never had a King Consort before, and there was great uncertainly over what the role would entail. The Queen was not only concerned to fi nd an agreeable companion (and one who would get her pregnant) but also to have 'a man about the realm'. So much of the traditional imagery of monarchy was male and military, she felt that she needed someone to discharge that function. There was also the question of protection, not just of her person but also of her kingdom. She needed a prince with power and connections of his own. Unfortunately that ran directly counter to her very keen sense that God had entrusted the realm of England to her – and to her alone. All these problems were to become apparent in due course. First it was necessary to look at the possibilities, and it was in this connection that Mary made her fi rst serious mistake. Many years before, when she had been under severe pressure from her father, the Emperor Charles V (who was also her cousin) had been her champion. At that time she had declared that he was her true father and that she would never marry without his advice. This insult to Henry VIII had been overtaken by events and in any case he was no longer around to dictate. So she remembered her promise and consulted Charles through his ambassador, Simon Renard. Charles in turn remembered that they had once been betrothed but he was now, he declared, too old for such an adventure. His son Philip, on the other hand, was by happy chance a widower

.13 By comparison, the other candidates were non-starters. There was Dom Luis, the brother of the King of Portugal (who had been considered before) but the Emperor successfully blocked his candidature. There was Edward Courtenay, now Earl of Devon.

Courtenay was the domestic candidate, and attracted much infl uential backing, but he was a foolish and irresponsible young man who had spent most of his youth in the Tower. That was no fault of his, but it had left him seriously inexperienced in life and there is no evidence that Mary ever seriously considered marrying him. That left Philip and, of course, Simon Renard. Renard was an ingratiating fellow with an agenda of his own, and because of the sensitive nature of the issue that he was 194

discussing, soon won an exclusive place in Mary's confi dence. He dominated the negotiations, to the virtual exclusion of the Council, and that caused considerable resentment. His confi dential relationship with the Queen was unprecedented and should never have been allowed to arise. Mary should never have committed her choice of husband to the arbitrament of any outside party and should never have admitted Renard to the confi dences that he enjoyed.

When the matter came into the open there were protests. Parliament petitioned her in November to marry within the realm and was brusquely told to mind its own business. In January 1554 there was a briefl y dangerous rebellion in Kent, led by Sir Thomas Wyatt, which demanded that she change her mind. It was suppressed but the sentiment lingered on. In the event, the Emperor's keenness on the match worked very much in England's favour. Charles was not much interested in England but marrying its Queen would give Philip an ideal power base from which to fi ght off rival claims to the Low Countries when Charles himself either retired or died. He was planning retirement and was mindful of the fact that he had gerrymandered the Imperial constitution in order to settle the succession of the Netherlands on Philip, who would in addition receive Spain – but not the Holy Roman Empire.

14 In other words there were issues about the Low Countries that the English marriage would resolve. He was therefore inclined to be generous with concessions when it came to defi ning the role of the King Consort. The draft articles, drawn up on 7 December, ran: Prince Philip shall so long as the matrimony endures, enjoy jointly with the Queen her style and kingly name, and shall aid her in her administration. The prince shall leave to the Queen the disposition of all offi ces, lands and revenues of their dominions; they shall be disposed to those born there. All matters shall be treated in English … There may be made another contract, wherein the prince shall swear he will not promote to any offi ce in England any foreigner … If no children are left, and the Queen dies before him, he shall not challenge any right in the kingdom, but permit the succession to come to them to whom it shall belong by right and law … England shall not be entangled in the war between the Emperor and the French King … 15

There was a lot more in the same vein, making provision for dower and for any children of the marriage but these are the essential limitations that Charles was willing to accept on his son's behalf in order to secure the title of King. When he found out about them, Philip was not amused. This was not at all the kind of kingship that he had envisaged – in fact it was downright dishonourable. He considered abandoning the whole project, but then refl ected that once he was established in England there might be ways around the various obstacles in his path – a suspicion that had also occurred to some of the English – so he accepted

the treaty with an apparently good grace. At the same time he entered a secret reservation, declaring that he had only signed the terms to enable his marriage to take place – and that he had no intention of observing them! Fortunately the English did not fi nd out about that.

16

The treaty was duly concluded in January 1554, proclaimed, and in due course ratifi ed by Parliament. This last step was unprecedented in respect of a royal marriage but then the circumstances were also unprecedented. Meanwhile, treaty or no treaty, there was a legal ambiguity to be resolved. By English law a married woman (or

femme couvert) surrendered her property on marriage to her husband, in whom it remained vested for the duration of his life. Did the same apply to the Crown, and if so, where did that leave the marriage treaty? It was generally assumed that the law did not apply to the Crown but the issue was open to dispute. Again, resort was had to statute, and when Parliament reconvened on 2 April an Act was passed declaring that the Imperial powers of the Crown of England were the same, whether vested in male of female. In other words the Queen was also King and no legal or other gender limitations applied.17

Meanwhile, Philip appeared to be sulking. His formal betrothal to Mary took place in March but he was represented by his father's servant the Count of Egmont and he sent neither message nor token. Nor did he communicate the reason for his delays to Simon Renard, who was left jumping up and down with frustration and rapidly running out of excuses. In fact he seems to have had genuine diffi culties, both in settling the government of Spain (where he was regent) and in raising the money that Charles insisted that he bring with him to pay the northern armies, but none of this was explained. Eventually, in early June, he set off from Valladolid on his leisurely way towards La Coruna, and as soon as word of this reached England, a group of English nobles set off to meet him – arriving in Galicia before he did. Philip's English household was assembled at Southampton to meet him and the Queen travelled to Bishop's Waltham in Hampshire, where Philip's harbinger, the Marquis de las Navas, found her early in July. He bore the long-expected token from

her betrothed, a magnifi cent table diamond

18 and, although the household at Southampton was getting restive, the long period of waiting was almost over.

On 20 July he landed at Southampton, was honourably received and girded with the Order of the Garter. He then made his way to Winchester where the Dean's lodging had been prepared to receive him. The Queen meanwhile had moved into the Bishop's palace, a distinction of status that was not lost upon the Prince's vigilant entourage. The couple met for the fi rst time the same evening, and Mary's feelings can only be imagined. She was on the brink of a political and sexual encounter that should, by the normal rules of royal marriage, have 196

occurred at least 20 years earlier. We are told that both were magnifi cently attired and honourably accompanied and that they greeted each other affectionately and 'chatted pleasantly'

.19 The whole thing was carefully staged for what would now be called 'the world's press', and their real feelings are unknown. It is not even known what language they used for their pleasant chat. Mary understood Spanish but spoke it very hesitantly while Philip's French was in the same state. He (of course) spoke no English so perhaps they used Latin, in which both were fl uent. The marriage duly took place on St James's day, 25 July, in Winchester cathedral. The day was chosen as a careful compliment to the bridegroom, whose nose was otherwise put comprehensively out of joint. During the ceremony his seat was placed lower than hers and he stood on her left, which would normally have been the bride's position. The royal sword was only borne before him after the wedding and his jealous servants claimed that even at the wedding banquet he was served from silver while the Queen was served from gold. 20 Nevertheless he was duly recognized as King of England when their elaborate titles were proclaimed and the crowd outside the cathedral gave him an unexpectedly warm reception, noting particularly how affectionate his demeanour towards his new wife appeared to be. The whole symbolism of the occasion had been designed to emphasize that Philip's status in England depended upon his wife, but that was virtually ignored in the spate of Habsburg propaganda that celebrated his triumph in England. 21 Simon Renard may have known differently but continental observers were clearly expecting the new King to dominate his wife and to use his position in England for his own (largely international) purposes. It might be expected that Mary would have been traumatized by having sex for the fi rst time at the age of 38. Following custom, she remained secluded for a few days after the wedding but by all accounts was blissfully happy. Philip was less enchanted. From hints that were soon being dropped by his Spanish servants, he found her disappointing 'para la sensualidad de la carne', which may well have been the case as she was 11 years his senior and totally inexperienced.22

Nevertheless he had done his duty and when, three months later, there was talk of her being pregnant, he retained a discreet silence. As a sexual encounter, their relationship seems to have worked

reasonably well and it may be signifi cant that, despite the fact that he had many enemies, no scandal attached to him while he was in England. The ‘bakers’ daughters and other poor whores’ whom he was accused of using after his departure do not feature, so presumably he found his wife satisfactory. However, there were other problems. Philip must have been aware that a full English household had been appointed for him. After all, he had signed a treaty that bound him to the use of English servants. Nevertheless, he brought a full Spanish establishment with him, which included not only a

Chapel Royal (which had been expected), but also a Majordomo and a complete set of Chamber servants (which had not). It can only be supposed that Philip had yielded to pressure from his Spanish offi cers, who had declared that their beloved lord could not be expected to entrust himself to a bunch of barbarians whose language he did not even understand. Of course, there was immediately trouble, which the King must have anticipated. He immediately decreed that he would be served in public by his English offi cers, in accordance with the treaty, but in private he would retain his Spanish servants. Both sides immediately and loudly complained – the Spanish that they were dishonoured and the English that they had no access to the privy apartments. The issue was never really resolved but both sides had to live with the compromise. More seriously, the lower servants on both sides were full of hatred and contempt towards each other and there was violence ('knife work' as one contemporary put it) even within the precincts of the court. There was also murder and robbery on the streets and the English were not always to blame. Both the King and the Queen were distressed by this blatant racism but neither could do much to halt it. Philip made the largest contribution by sending the majority of his noble followers and their retinues to join the army in the Low Countries, but the problem was never completely solved as long as Philip was in England.

The King was in a very diffi cult situation. Despite his harmonious relations with his wife she had given him no English patrimony. This was unprecedented because consorts had always hitherto been endowed with lands of their own and expected to dispense their own patronage as well as paying some of their own expenses. Such lands had varied somewhat in value but had usually produced an income of between £3,000 and £4,500 a year. Philip might reasonably have expected to have received the Duchy of Cornwall or Lancaster, which would have given him an English clientage and English resources. Instead of which he received nothing and had to pay all his English bills out of his Spanish revenues. These were large, but already over committed and when we remember that he also felt obliged to pay substantial pensions to the members of the English Council and to other selected courtiers, it becomes apparent that the Crown of England was an expensive honour.

23 Nor did he have much of a role in the government of England. All state documents were dutifully issued in both their names and he regularly accompanied the Queen on ceremonial occasions but most of his working life was spent with his own Council, dealing with the affairs of the Empire and of Spain. The proceedings of the English council were translated into Latin for his benefi t and he consulted regularly with those councillors (notably Gardiner) who were fl uent in that language but his fi ngerprints appear very little on the routine processes of English government. What he did do was rather more 198

subtle. Throughout the winter of 1554–5, and into the New Year, he encouraged courtly entertainments, and staged 'war games' – mostly tournaments. Mary had virtually neglected the Revels before her marriage. Her coronation in October 1553 had been the only one that century not marked by jousts and similar celebrations and Christmas 1553 had been exceptionally quiet. Philip had two motives for wishing to change this. In the fi rst place he wanted to make an impact on the Court, both to encourage loyalty and to cheer everyone up; in the second place he wanted some popular approval and some recruits for his armies. Both these aims were served by tournaments and if the King took part in person (as he sometimes did) so much the better. After all, as a knight of the Garter, he was supposed to be a showpiece of English chivalry – and that meant more than being affectionate to his wife.

The other thing that the King did during his fi rst few months in England was to end the 20-year-old ecclesiastical schism. This was the outcome of a longmaturing scheme by the Emperor and was mainly in the interest of securing Habsburg infl uence in Rome. As we have seen, one of Mary's earliest expressed wishes was to return to the papal obedience and in that she was fully supported by Cardinal Pole, who had been appointed Legate to England as soon as news of her accession had reached Rome. However, as soon as the possibility of a marriage between the Queen and his son was raised and the extent of his infl uence over Mary became clear, Charles began t

o urge caution.24 The English were deeply sunk in heresy, the French might try to intervene – and so on. His real motive, however, was to ensure that the credit for such a reconciliation should go to Philip rather than to Mary and her English advisers. Through his agents in England, he managed to sabotage a unilateral declaration of allegiance proposed by the Lord Chancellor in the second parliament of the reign but as soon as the marriage was completed, his opposition evaporated and he began to encourage Philip to seize his opportunity. This was realistic enough, because opposition to the reconciliation in England (apart from the Protestant minority) came largely from those who had purchased former ecclesiastical property and who saw their investment disappearing. Philip understood this and quickly determined that the easiest route to success would be by persuading

Pope Julius III to write off the English monasteries, relying on the piety of future generations to reestablish them. After some negotiation, he succeeded in doing that, and the way to reconciliation was thus opened. 25 Mary simply did not have the infl uence in the Curia to have accomplished that – nor was she convinced of its necessity. In this respect the Queen showed markedly less political judgement than her husband, whose Catholicism was fortunately above suspicion. Consequently, having secured his main objective in Rome, Philip then had to persuade both

Cardinal Pole and his wife to accept the deal. Pole was reluctantly convinced by early November and the formalities of reconciliation were then completed but it was Christmas before the King talked Mary round, and what method he used we do not know

.26 There was then a question over the legal title to the secularized lands and this was resolved (with Philip's support) by incorporating the terms of the papal dispensation into the statute that repealed the Royal Supremacy. Altogether, the reconciliation was very much Philip's doing and was celebrated as such with thunderous applause all over Catholic Europe.27 Mary was barely mentioned, except by Julius in his offi cial correspondence and decrees. Just why the Queen allowed herself to be so comprehensively sidelined is not known. The idea of bargaining with heretics (or 'possessioners') was repugnant to her but her duty required no less. Perhaps she was compensating for her failure to give Philip a more active role in regular government by delegating this extremely important task to him; perhaps she was becoming increasingly preoccupied with her supposed pregnancy, or perhaps she was just ducking the issue. No sooner had the reconciliation been completed than the imprisoned Protestant leaders began to be put on trial. Philip had nothing whatsoever to do with this. He had no objection to persecuting heretics but judged that such an initiative in England was inexpedient. He also knew his own lack of rapport with the English people and realized that if the policy of burning the recalcitrant turned out to be unpopular (as it showed every sign of being) then he would be blamed. He made cautious dissenting noises but did nothing to check the persecution. 28 This was

fronted by Reginald Pole as Cardinal Legate but the real driving forces were Lord Chancellor Gardiner, and the Queen. Mary was quite convinced that so-called Protestants were merely avaricious opportunists, seeking to ruin the Church both morally and fi nancially and their pretended constancy under affl iction was just a trick to win sympathy. The mere threat of burning would have them recanting in droves! Up to a point she was right; many did recant. However, when some of the leaders proved willing to suffer the ultimate penalty, Gardiner soon realized that, as a policy, this was not going to work. Unfortunately, the Queen showed no such sensitivity. As far as she

was concerned, burning heretics was not a policy that could be picked up or laid down but a solemn religious duty. Insults to the Holy Mass seared her conscience to the bone and no punishment could be too severe for such blasphemy. She had defended the rite when it was under attack and would do so now from a position of much greater strength. As 1555 advanced, Mary's condition became more pronounced and Philip, with his eye on his father's affairs, became restless. It required fi rm guidance from the latter to persuade him to remain in England until his wife should be safely delivered. Once he was the father of an heir to the throne, his position would be 200

infi nitely stronger. Simon Renard dutifully conveyed the message but one of the benefi ts of Philip's arrival had been the ending of his confi dential relationship with the Queen. The King neither liked nor trusted him, and although he remained at his post until the autumn of 1555 he had no real infl uence.

29 In that respect at least, Mary observed her husband's wishes. No one seems to have known when the Queen's 'hour' was due, which was perhaps a sign of the impending disaster. About 20 April she retired into the customary female seclusion, and the government of the country simply carried on without her. No doubt some matters were referred to Philip but his role did not noticeably increase. Fortunately no major issues pressed upon the Council. Meanwhile the court waited … and waited. Nothing happened. Observers declared that birth was imminent and then withdrew their predictions. Scandalous tales began to circulate: the Queen was ill or bewitched; there was an elaborate substitution plot masterminded from Spain; 30 the Queen was not really pregnant at all – and so on. Still nothing happened and the upbeat predictions from her physicians and her ladies began to waver and then fell silent. By July it was obvious that no normal birth was in prospect, and Mary was forced to face the awful truth – her pregnancy had been a phantom. The implications of this for her health and the impact upon her state of mind were profound. The political implications were no less severe. The whole regime had suddenly lost credibility. Instead of a safe Catholic succession, extending the Queen's proceedings into the indefi nite future, the prospect was now highly uncertain. If Mary were to die, would Philip ignore the treaty and bid for the Crown himself? Elizabeth was the next heir by English law, and she was a very different kind of woman. What was Philip to do? He was now, at the age of 28, saddled with a wife who was almost certainly barren. He had, admittedly, one son, the unpromising Don Carlos, but one life was a poor protection against dynastic failure, as Edward VI had just demonstrated. As soon as he decently could, the King took his mind off these problems by returning to the continent to assume the pressing responsibilities that his father was so anxious to shed, leaving Mary exhausted and depressed.

Philip offi cially took over from Charles in the Low Countries in

September 1555 and that gave him enough to be doing for the time being. However, he did not forget the problem of England. How could he when his distressed wife was constantly writing to him urging him to return? The country needed his strong hand (in what way is not clear); they could try again for a baby. She did not put it in so many words but that was the gist of at least one of her letters. The King had no faith at all in his wife's fertility, but there was one option that he could try – he could have an English coronation. The fact that such a ceremony had not followed his marriage is indicative of Mary's double standard towards her

husband. On the one hand she was anxious to please him personally and to be a good Habsburg wife; but on the other hand she was extremely cagey about giving away any aspect of her authority. This attitude was embodied in the marriage treaty, and was undoubtedly adopted on the advice of her Council. As long as there had been the prospect of an heir, Philip had been very restrained, feeling, probably rightly, that such a birth would give him most of what he wanted without any effort on his part. Now, however, the situation was changed, and the fact that Mary wanted him back gave him a hold over her. He had originally been intending to return for the parliament, which was called for 21 October, but that, he now discovered, would be impossible. In fact he might not come back at all unless he was given a more honourable position in England, and that would involve a coronation.

31 He had been advised (wrongly, it would seem) that in England the coronation was of unusual signifi cance and that once he was crowned he would be able to fi nd ways to ignore, or at least to circumvent, his treaty limitations.

It was precisely this fear that raised such a storm in England. Philip as a King Consort on a limited tenure was one thing, particularly now there were such grave doubts about the Queen's health, but Philip in unlimited possession was something else entirely. A potentially serious conspiracy was raised, passing under the name of the adventurer Henry Dudley, which would have involved a small invasion by English exiles presently in France, and a major rebellion among the West Country gentry. Its declared purpose was to 'send the Queen overseas to her husband' and replace her with her sister Elizabeth. It was detected in March 1556, and came to nothing but it was a sinister indication of the way opinion was moving. At the same time the Cheshire agitator John Bradford published a scurrilous attack upon the King entitled

The copye of a letter … sent to the erles of Arundel, Derbie, Shrewsbury and Penbroke … in which he accused the nobles named of seeking to obtain the King's crowning by force or fraud: If the crown were the Queen's, in such sort that she might do with it what she would, both now and after her death, there might appear some rightful pretence in

giving it over to a stranger prince; but seeing it belongs to the heirs of England after her death, you commit deadly sin and damnation in unjustly giving and taking away the right of others …32

How large a constituency Bradford spoke for is uncertain but the Queen was understandably concerned – and very annoyed. The letter not only denounced the prospect of a coronation, it accused Philip of sexual promiscuity in colourful terms, and these charges were not without foundation. Bradford would have had no means of knowing it, but the King's Spanish servants were writing cautiously to each other about the need to keep Mary in ignorance of his 'amusements', 202

'because she is easily upset'. In a way all this anti-Spanish agitation played into the Queen's hands because she had no desire to give Philip a coronation, and was able to use the popular protests as an excuse. She would have to refer the matter to Parliament, she claimed, and Parliament would never allow it. Nonsense, he replied, quite correctly. His coronation was none of Parliament's business – it was a prerogative matter

.33 However, on this issue the Queen would not budge and Philip became fi rst angry and then resigned.

He may also have been considering that there were other possible ways of increasing his infl uence. He knew that Mary desperately wanted him back in England for personal as much as for political reasons – and that gave him leverage. He could try insisting upon his right to be consulted over major appointments. The Lord Privy Seal, the Earl of Bedford, had died in March 1555, and the Lord Chancellor, the Bishop of Winchester, in November. Neither of these offi ces had been fi lled in December 1555, and the Duke of Alba urged the King to make sure that his own men were promoted, rather than 'Queen's men'. Alba was not referring here to Spaniards, but to Englishmen 'of the King's devotion', although the idea that the English council could be so divided may not have existed outside the Duke's imag

ination.34 Philip certainly was consulted and William, Lord Paget, who became Lord Privy Seal could perhaps be described as his man but Nicholas Heath, who was given the Great Seal, was at best a compromise. In neither case had Philip obviously controlled the appointment. The other way of asserting himself was to involve England in his war with France. War was, *par excellence*, the 'matter impertinent to women'. Women could not be expected to lead armies, or to understand the logistics of warfare. Moreover, as Philip was well aware there was a party among the English nobility that, although it expressed a dutiful loyalty to its sovereign lady, was actually looking for male leadership. Once England was at war, the infl uence of that party was bound to increase and his own role would be augmented along with it. Philip had taken over the Crowns of Spain in January 1556, and one of his fi rst actions had been to sign the Truce of Vaucelles on 6 February. It was supposed to last for fi ve years but in fact broke down within months thanks to the provocative actions of

Pope Paul IV, who has succeeded Julius III in March 1555. Paul was a Neapolitan, violently antiSpanish, and counting on the support of France, particularly the Duke of Guise. In September 1556 his actions in central Italy drove the profoundly Catholic Philip to order his armies into the Papal states. The Duke of Alba's soldiers are alleged to have advanced on their knees. It was not long before the Duke of Guise appeared to the rescue, and full-scale war was resumed. It was at that point that Philip's English policy turned to thoughts of involvement and the advantages of that course began to grow upon him. England was not a major power in military

terms, but it had a useful navy and might even be persuaded to disgorge some money if approached in the right manner.

News of this impending approach came as a relief to Mary, who had been coping on her own with the government of England since August 1555. This was not, she felt, how it was meant to be. There were no foreign policy decisions to be made because the options had been foreclosed by her marriage. The only issue was how to counter the diplomatic hostility of France, so that in a way open war and the withdrawal of all French diplomats would be welcome. She also felt that her relationship with her husband had suffered by the long separation and by the issues that had arisen between them. Her own emotions blew hot and cold. Sometimes she was longing to have him back and writing pathetic letters to Charles asking for his intercession. Some times she was (apparently) kicking his picture around the Privy Chamber in sheer frustration at yet another round of prevar

ication.35 It may also have occurred to her that when England was at war her husband would have a role as a national leader that would not encroach upon her own honour because it would be uniquely masculine. Altogether, there was a lot to be said for getting England into the war and when Philip indicated that he would be quite willing to come over and lean on the English to endorse the decision, then Mary's mind was made up. Here at last was a way in which she could be a truly supportive wife without compromising her domestic authority. Unfortunately, her council did not agree. They pointed out that the terms of the marriage treaty exempted England from any involvement in the war that had been going on in 1554, and that that war had only been suspended by a truce, not broken by a peace. So the current confl ict was actually the same one that had been going on then, and not (as Philip claimed), a new one. Moreover, the country could not afford to go to war, lacking both military and fi nancial resources. When the King arrived in March 1557, to Mary's chagrin, it presented him with a *consulta*, arguing the case against war.36 In fact, opinion in the country was divided. The merchant community, particularly in London, was deeply hostile but elsewhere gentlemen with pretensions to being soldiers were looking forward to the prospect and the French were generally even more unpopular that the Spaniards. Despite Mary's support, Philip admitted that he found

negotiations with the council unexpectedly uphill work. Two factors broke the deadlock. The fi rst was that the Council did not make decisions on issues of war and peace and although neither Philip nor Mary wanted to act without the Council's consent, they were perfectly entitled to do so. The second was that a strange raid by a small group of English exiles on Scarborough, allegedly with French support, converted some councillors because of the provocation involved. 37 The council consequently, with reluctance and several dissenters, voted in favour of war, and 204

it was duly declared in June 1557. When Philip returned to the continent in July he was followed by an English expeditionary force under the command of the Earl of Pembroke – the only snag was that he found himself paying the bill. Insofar as the main purpose of Philip's visit had been the declaration of war, it was successful. However his secondary purpose had been to pressure Princess Elizabeth into marriage with his trusted henchman, Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, and in that he failed totally. The King had by this time decided that if (or when) Mary died, it would not be worth his while to press his own claim to the succession. The mood of England was such that it would involve fi ghting a civil war and as long as his forces were fully committed against the French that was out of the question. The next best option would be to control the English heir through a favourable marriage, but Elizabeth could see that one coming and would have none of it. Rather curiously, Mary was also opposed to her husband on that issue and it was for that reason as much as the Princess's own obstinacy that his bid failed. It may be that she simply did not want to contemplate the succession but from casual remarks that were dropped, it seems that the real reason may have been rather subtler. Mary had said some time before – even before her own marriage – that she did not want to contemplate Elizabeth as her heir 'for certain respects in which she resembled her mother (Anne Boleyn).

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By 1557 it seems that she had convinced herself that Elizabeth was not really her father's daughter at all but the child of one of Anne's alleged lovers. The Duke of Savoy was far too good for such a bastard. For whatever reason, she would not consent to Philip putting the screws on Elizabeth, so he left without achieving his purpose. In spite of that, his personal relations with Mary seem to have returned to the state of the autumn of 1554, before false hopes of pregnancy disrupted their sexual activity. Five months later, the Queen announced that she was again pregnant and he allowed no fl icker of incredulity to diminish his congratulations. However, no one else believed her, either within England or outside of it, and the Cardinal of Lorraine is alleged to have remarked, not quite accurately, that it was eight months since her husband had left her. No preparations were made for

a royal lying in and no nursery staff were appointed. Instead, in March 1558, when the child should have been due, Mary realized that she had been deceived again. She made her will later that month, refusing to admit that there would be no heir of her body but everyone else seems to have accepted that fact and wondered just ho

w ill the Queen was.39

The winter of 1557–8 was depressing for a number of reasons. Not only was Mary deluding herself again with hopes of pregnancy, but the harvest failures of 1555 and 1556 had been followed by food shortages, and then by epidemic disease. The infl uenza of that winter was among the most deadly outbreaks of

the century, carrying off between 10 per cent and 15 per cent of the population and leaving thousands more debilitated for weeks on end.

40 Equally bad was the fact that the war, which had started so promisingly with the victory at St Quentin in August, had gone from bad to worse and, in January 1558, the ancient English enclave of Calais fell to a surprise French attack. The Council, which had never ceased to have doubts about the war, had been saving money by reducing the garrison and the French knew this perfectly well. Worse still, Philip, who had done his best to save the place, then found himself being blamed for its loss, which was fair only to the extent that it had been his initiative that had taken England into the war in the fi rst place. It is not surprising that by the spring of 1558 the King was inclined to cut his losses in England. The pensions to his English supporters had long since fallen into arrears for the good reason that they were no longer supporting him. Missing her husband again, Mary had become increasingly reliant for personal support upon Reginald Pole, now the Cardinal Archbishop of Canterbury. Her stream of affectionate letters did not cease, but his responses became increasingly perfunctory. In fact, she was an embarrassment, because he was only 31 and urgently needed more children, which it was obvious to everyone (except Mary herself) that she would never bear. The French reported that he was considering an annulment but there is no fi rm evidence that his thinking had gone that far. The Count of Feria, who was representing him in England by this time, reported that the factions within the Council were again inhibiting good government. One of the few informal initiatives that Philip had been able to take during his stay in England from 1554–5 had been to knock heads together and persuade the council to adopt a suitable level of consensus. When he left, he arranged for a ‘Council of State’ or inner ring to report to him regularly on English affairs and it did so at least until the end of 1556. His second visit seems to have put an end to that arrangement, and after he left for the second and last time, new divisions opened up. Originally it had been Paget versus Gardiner, now it was Pole versus the rest. In fact there is little evidence of these confl icts, and Feria, like Renard before him, was mostly complaining that they were not acting suffi ciently in his master’s interests. However, that tells its own story. By the summer of 1558, Philip’s grip upon England was very slack indeed and if it had

not been for the war might well have disappeared altogether. The Queen's religious devotions had always been a bulwark of her life, and an ever-present comfort during times of affl iction – which had been only too frequent. Unfortunately, the negative side of that piety had become a fi erce determination to exterminate heresy. Heresy was to blame for all the ills that had affl icted England – the Church in ruins, the harvest failure, the infl uenza epidemic, the social disruption. In fact the positive work of Catholic restoration 206

had gone ahead very well since 1555. Parish churches and cathedrals had been restored, clergy recruitment was booming and good works of Catholic instruction were being published and used. Even a few new monasteries and chantries had been founded. However, the aspect of this restoration that will always be remembered is the fact that nearly 300 Protestants, men and women, humble and gentle, were burned alive and dozens more died in prison. This was not necessary and in the eyes of most bishops not desirable, but Mary's sense of duty drove her on. Perhaps her biggest mistake had been to make a martyr out of Thomas Cranmer when he had been on the point of recanting, but the whole policy was extreme and quite at odds with everything else that we know about the Queen.

She was a great supporter of what she called 'good preaching', using one of the heretics' main weapons against themselves and was an enthusiastic promoter of clerical education, in which she agreed wholeheartedly with Cardinal Pole. She read her Bible, both in English and in Latin, and seems to have protected the former from the assaults of more radical sacerdotalists. She was in every other respect a gentle, merciful soul and her personal servants loved her dearly but she had this one terrible blind spot, and it earned her the name of 'Bloody Mary' by which she has been known to generations of English schoolchildren. In August 1558, Mary was ill, perhaps with a mild version of the lethal infl uenza, but appeared to shake it off. Then in early October, she fell ill again, and this time anxiety swiftly mounted. Philip wrote anxiously, because her usual regular letters had ceased but he did not come. Realizing that this illness might well prove fatal, he had no desire to be caught in England at the time of her death. This was not callous indifference but a realization that if he was in the country, his honour would require him to take control of the situation, and that might inhibit the lawful succession. So he stayed away, sending the Count of Feria back to England as his special envoy. By the time that he arrived, on 9 November, the end was visibly approaching:

I … found the queen our lady's health to be just as Dr Nunez describes in his letter to your majesty. There is, therefore, no hope of her life, but on the contrary, each hour I think that they will come to inform me of her death, so rapidly does her condition deteriorate from one

day to the next …

41

He then went on to describe the nervous condition of the council, who received him ‘like one coming with bulls from a dead pope’, and to speculate about how Elizabeth would handle the situation. When he wrote, on 14 November, Mary was still clinging to life, but she died early in the morning of 17 November, and within hours Elizabeth had been proclaimed in London. We cannot be sure

what killed her. It could have been a return of the infl uenza but contemporaries spoke of a ‘dropsy’, which seems to indicate a tumour. Probably the most likely explanation is that she died of cancer of the womb, a disease of which her false pregnancies had been advance warnings. She was interred with full traditional rites at Westminster on 14 December, and Bishop John White of Winchester pronounced the encomium:

She was a king’s daughter, she was a king’s sister, she was a king’s wife, she was a queen and by the same title a king also. What she suffered in each of these degrees before and since she came to the Crown, I will not chronicle; only this I say, howsoever it pleased God to will her patience to be exercised in the world, she had in all estates the fear of God in her heart.

42

The chief mourner was Margaret, Countess of Lennox. Mary had wanted Margaret to succeed her, in preference to her bastard and suspect half sister but towards the end had recognized the inevitable – her people would have no one but Elizabeth. So her life ended in bitter failure and her kinsman and great supporter Reginald Pole followed her to the grave within hours. As we shall see, Elizabeth had a remarkably clean start, because Feria had already assured her of Philip’s goodwill and within months he was proposing marriage to her.

It could be argued that Mary’s failure was due primarily to circumstances outside her control, particularly her early death at the age of 43 and the fact that her successor was so different. However, that would be to ignore some very important factors. She did not fail simply because she was a woman. The statute of recognition took care of that disability but her marriage was a serious mistake and from that fl owed much of her misfortune. Marriage was necessary if the succession was to be secured and there was no way in which she could have known how that would work out. But why Philip? He was a Habsburg, represented the traditional Burgundian alliance and was a good Catholic. But in other respects he was a disaster waiting to happen. The Spaniards were seriously unpopular, thanks largely to the ‘black legend’ which was spreading from Italy and the Low Countries.

Philip spoke no English, had no knowledge of the country, and was inclined to be contemptuous of its nobility, whom he regarded as venal. He was also the immediate heir to Spain and to its empire in the New World. He would soon have little enough time for England, whatever the expectations. Being married to so great a Prince also undermined Mary to some extent; she was so anxious to please him and yet so conscious of her duties to her own realm. The emotional tensions seem to have torn her apart – and that could (and should) have been foreseen. The answer is that she married Philip largely to please his father, her ancient protector, and that no man would have done. Nor 208

would any man have suffered the role confl ict that Mary had to endure. She was in many ways an intensely conventional woman, brought up to be a consort and to fulfi l a supporting role, if circumstances had not thrust her in to the spotlight. Whatever she might pretend in public, she always regarded her sex as a liability and accepted that there were 'matters impertinent to women'. She complained of having to shout at her Council and suffered periods of almost hysterical emotional collapse. In fact her duty to God, her realm and her husband were in constant tension and the stress may well have shortened her life. She worked like a slave and both Philip and Pole worried about the effect that this was having upon her health. In short, she never reconciled her power with her gender, or thought of the two as being truly compatible. It would require a woman with a much more original mind to see that sex could be a weapon, and one to which the masculine world could fi nd no ready answer.

10

The Unmarried Sovereign: Elizabeth I

The best known fact about the fi rst Elizabeth is that she never married, but

'lived and died a virgin'. Whether she was actually a virgin is an interesting speculation but irrelevant in this context. For many years she ignored or evaded the pressing advice of her council – particularly William Cecil – and her parliament, to marry and secure the succession. She drove the political nation wild with anxiety on the latter score and her failure to act was almost universally condemned as irresponsible. With the benefi t of hindsight, it looks like a successful strategy. For over 20 years she was able to use the integrity of her own body as a symbol for the integrity of her realm and, when the time came, to hand over her throne to an adult and Protestant king, who was also the hereditary heir. It is not, however, certain that it was a strategy at all. The chances are that Elizabeth never made a policy decision not to marry. It was just that she was well aware of the risks that such an undertaking would involve and every time a negotiation came to the point of decision, she found a reason to back

off. The personal cost of such withdrawals may well have been high, but Elizabeth had no desire to be caught in the trap that had so affl icted her sister – whether to be a good wife or a good Queen. In order to understand Elizabeth's attitude to marriage, it is necessary to go back a step and to try to assess how she saw her overall position. Like Mary, she believed that God had called her to the throne but unlike her sister she did not feel any compulsion to right the wrongs of an affl icted generation. Instead God, in his mysterious way, had called her to the Royal Supremacy, and put into her hands the government of His Church. God had created her as a woman but, instead of regarding that as a liability, she saw it as an exciting challenge, because God had also given her wit, and a sexuality that enabled her to manipulate the rather conventional males with whom she had to deal. As far as Elizabeth was concerned, there were no matters 'impertinent to women'; it was just that a woman had to manage things rather differently.

1 She could not imitate her father's masculine and martial image and she did not try. The female equivalent was beauty and mystery – particularly mystery. So she set out to play the 'femme fatale' and to baffl e and bewilder the councillors whom she could not dominate by more conventional methods. Perhaps she was often genuinely unable to make up 210

her mind, but much of her celebrated procrastination and indecisiveness was deliberately intended to demonstrate her control. She was well aware that only the monarch could make certain important decisions and she had no intention of being taken for granted.

In order to understand Elizabeth, it is necessary to look at her mother. She was only 3 years old when Anne Boleyn was executed, so we are not looking at questions of example and upbringing, but at what was in her genes. Her sharp intelligence could have come from either parent but Henry was not noted for his cool rationality when under stress and her capacity for intellectual detachment came from her mother. She also inherited the feisty sexuality that had served Anne so well in the years of her courtship and so badly when she was Henry's queen. Elizabeth, like her mother, was an inveterate fl irt, and like her mother used this quality to manipulate men. When Mary spoke of 'certain qualities in which she resembled her mother', the chances are that she had a proclivity for heresy in mind, but it was a shrewd observation, none the less. Mary had used the metaphor of marriage to her kingdom but when she took a natural husband that image lost its forc

e.2 Elizabeth used it from the beginning, and it became more telling as time went on. When the House of Commons petitioned her to marry in the spring of 1559, at which time she had been on the throne barely six months, she replied:

… when the public charge of governing the kingdom came upon me, it seemed unto me an inconsiderate folly to draw upon myself the cares which might proceed of marriage. To conclude, I am already bound unto a husband, which is the kingdom of England, and that may suffi ce you …

3

She then showed her coronation ring, as the pledge of that marriage, and concluded 'reproach me so no more that I have no children, for every one of you, and as many as are English, are my children and kinsfolks …'

It was magnifi cent rhetoric, and if it was ever uttered in that form, it was probably received simply as such. We know of it only from Camden's

Annales, published many years later but it is true to the spirit in which she was acting in 1559, and the sentiment, if not the words, is probably authentic. At the time the speculation ran on whom, not whether, the Queen would marry and many years of fruitless political activity was to be predicated upon that notion until time fi nally foreclosed the option of children in about 1580.

It has been frequently noted that Elizabeth was a consummate actress, and extremely conscious of

her image.4 With Mary what you saw was what you got, and her best known portraits show her magnifi cently dressed but grim of face, advancing relentlessly into middle age. Elizabeth was always the Fairy

Queen, her face beautiful and mask like, unchanging for decades. How many people ever saw these portraits is not known, but they proliferate, often in poor contemporary copies, and it is likely that every gentleman's gallery and every livery hall displayed one as an expected token of allegiance. So conscious was Elizabeth of their importance that she even drafted a proclamation in 1562, when her real beauty had been marred by the smallpox, prohibiting any further portraits, and Nicholas Hilliard was later given the monopoly rights over the royal image to forestall any unfl attering representations.

5 When Mary shouted at her Council, as she complained, they paid no attention, no doubt putting it down to a touch of hysterics. When Elizabeth threw a tantrum, she boxed a few ears and everyone around her quaked. When they were out of her presence, they no doubt put that down to female eccentricity also but the trouble with Elizabeth was that no one ever knew whether her royal rages were genuine or simulated and if you tested a theory it was liable to cost you dear. Apart from her youth (she was 25 at her accession) and undoubted good looks, Elizabeth had also one other advantage over Mary, which she was at pains to emphasize. She was 'mere English'. This mattered in 1558, when anti-Spanish feeling was strong, and Mary was (as was pointed out by her enemies) half Spanish by blood and more than half by sentiment. 6 The fact that she had never set foot outside England, and that her spoken Spanish was distinctly inferior to Elizabeth's did not matter at all. Despite all her struggles to avoid it, her marriage had led to her being represented as a Spanish dependent. It is not surprising that Elizabeth, as Feria put it, 'gloried' in her father; he had been a great and English king who had (it could be claimed) defeated the French in three successive wars and dismissed that interfering foreigner Pope Clement VII. But Elizabeth's mother had also been English. Although trained in France and devoted to peace with that country, she had been purely English by blood – and that was important.

Whether any reluctance to impair this image impeded her marriage negotiations with foreign princes, particularly the Archduke Charles and the two separate Dukes of Anjou, is not immediately apparent. However the last of these, with Francois d'Anjou, was clearly targeted

for Francophobe reasons in John Stubbs,

The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf of 1579, which enraged the Queen as much for its implications of 'selling out to the foreigner' as for the suggestion that she was not in control of the situation.7 Nevertheless the measure of her rage was the measure of its accuracy and its sentiments corresponded with much of the advice which she was receiving from her council. When it came to the point, the two factors which derailed all these negotiations were a reluctance to reintroduce any element of foreign control over England and its affairs, and an

extreme sensitivity on Elizabeth's part to any loss of her own sovereignty. If, at the end of the day, it was impossible to be both a wife and a Queen – then Elizabeth would always choose to be a Queen.

There was, however, the possibility that she might marry one of her own subjects. That would eliminate one problem and ease the other. In the fi rst weeks of her reign the Earl of Arundel was thought to fancy his chances, although Feria dismissed him as joke and he turned out to be right. Lord Robert Dudley, however, was not a joke at all. Unlike his foreign competitors he was a known quantity. He was around the Court – Elizabeth knew him well – and so did many others who were less favourably inclined. Unlike her sister, Elizabeth had not reached adulthood without any kind of sexual experience. At the age of 14 she had tangled with Lord Thomas Seymour, the brother of the then Lord Protector. Seymour was a married man at the time, and his wife was pregnant. Both were highly sexed and Seymour was a notorious womanizer, but how far their entanglement went is not known. Soon after there were rumours that 'she was with child by the Lord Admiral' but Elizabeth herself always denied intercourse. Of course she would have said that anyway, once it was clear that she was not pregnant, but the chances are that it was tr

ue.8 Recently it has been argued that intercourse did indeed take place, and it was the fact that she did not fall pregnant that convinced Elizabeth that she was 'a barren stock'. However, that is pure speculation, based on a remark that the Queen made in 1566 on being informed of Mary Queen of Scots safe delivery. What does seem clear is that the young Elizabeth was thoroughly 'awakened' by the experience and knew thereafter that she was sexually attractive to men – a quality that Mary never possessed. Her reaction to Lord Robert built on that experience. That she was in love with him in the conventional sense seems certain. In the summer of 1560 she showed every sign of being infatuated and William Cecil, whose great success in Scotland she had virtually ignored, talked seriously of resigning his offi ce. There was, however, one serious snag. Robert was already married and hostile rumours were circulating that he intended to do away with his wife in order to marry the Queen. In September 1560 Amy was found at the bottom of a staircase at Cumnor Park with her

neck broken and the obvious conclusion was drawn. So obvious, indeed, that we can be reasonably certain that Lord Robert had no hand in his wife's death. Elizabeth was devastated. For a few months it had looked as though the woman in her was going to overcome the Queen but this tragedy acted like a bucket of cold water. Her Council, and particularly William Cecil, had been unanimously opposed to Lord Robert's pretensions, pointing out his lack of experience in government and the fact that, although he was the son of a Duke, his father had been a parvenue who had been executed for high

treason. If she had found a way to marry him, she would have been inviting kindred rivalries and feuds and an endless battle to defi ne (or limit) the powers of the Crown Matrimonial. All this negative advice now impinged upon her. She managed to get her lover formally acquitted by an inquest but the prospect of matrimony rapidly receded, to the relief of everyone except Lord Robert, who was to maintain his suit, with diminishing prospects, for another three or four years. Elizabeth had wanted Robert, as she was never to want any other man, and the brutal way in which political sense was forced to triumph over emotion, probably scarred her forever. It was not only that he was sexually attractive – she also probably calculated that she could manage him in a way which could not be guaranteed of any of his international competitors. His inexperience in that context was an asset. Perhaps he was so in love with her that he would hardly notice if the Crown Matrimonial meant virtually nothing. Perhaps …

That Robert wanted Elizabeth in the same way that she had wanted him is quite probable but unprovable. He also wanted the dignity and power of being the Queen's husband, and might very well have found some way to dispose of Amy that would have been short of murder. There would still have been a scandal, of course, but it might have been more manageable. As it was, he had to settle for the long running status of 'best friend'. His chemistry continued to have an unsettling effect upon her, even when she was so angry with his mismanagement of the Low Countries business in 1585, but politically he gradually became less of a loose cannon. His admission to the Privy Council and elevation to the earldom of Leicester in 1564 made him a conventional magnate and courtier, rather than the Queen's lover, whose access to the royal ear could never be predicted or controlled. Whether she ever slept with him during those infatuated months in 1560 will never be known but when Elizabeth believed herself to be at death's door in 1562, in addition to naming him 'protector' of the heirless kingdom, she denied that anything of that nature had ever occurred between them. Given the seriousness with which she took her relationship with God, her words on that occasion can probably be trusted.

Elizabeth always swore that she could never marry a man whom she

did not know and that adds an air of unreality to the suits of Eric of Sweden, the Earl of Arran, the Archduke Charles and Duke Henri d'Anjou, none of whom she ever met. The only one of her later suitors with whom she had a personal encounter was Duke Francois, whom she met twice, and it was on the second of those encounters in 1581 that she gave one of her most problematic performances. She was 48 by this time and heavily dependent upon cosmetics to repel the advancing years; he was 25, erratic and ambitious. He came to England in a lastditch attempt to save a marriage negotiation that he urgently needed to succeed 214

for his own reasons but which was already apparently on the rocks. Without the slightest warning, Elizabeth ‘entered into amorous discourse’ with her guest, kissed him passionately and gave him a ring, declaring that she would marry him forthw

ith.9 The Court was scandalized, especially the Queen’s ladies, who were rather a staid bunch by this time, and after a sleepless night of self-examination, she changed her mind and withdrew her pledge – to his infi nite chagrin. The incident is well attested, and of no ultimate signifi cance, but it does reveal that Elizabeth was as vulnerable to ‘hot fl ushes’ as any other woman. It also gives a brief and rather sad insight into what it cost the Queen to keep her political priorities constantly in view when her emotional needs might have pointed in quite a different direction. Elizabeth reigned long and successfully but ultimately at the price of never marrying, and remaining unfulfi lled in that dimension. She never (unlike Mary) considered marriage to be part of her duty to the realm. It could be that, but fundamentally it was a matter of personal inclination against political responsibility, and political responsibility always won. As we have already seen, this was largely a question of control. Elizabeth knew perfectly well, and if she had forgotten John Knox’s *First Blast* would have reminded her, that it was considered unnatural (and even unscriptural) for women to exercise control over men. 10 The Queen never accepted that, nor its accompanying notion that women were intellectually inferior. She had, and knew that she had, the intellectual edge on all the men about her, which was one reason why she felt confi dent about appointing the ablest servants she could fi nd – even if she knew that she would disagree with them. At the same time, she could not overawe them as her father had done but rather had to invent her own methods for keeping them in their place. Women were supposed to be indecisive so she took advantage of that by delaying important decisions far longer than any of her advisers thought wise. Sometimes this was done in the hope that some last minute change in the circumstances would either need to be taken into account, or might make any decision unnecessary. Thus she procrastinated over intervening in Scotland in 1560, in the hope that the Scots would be able to manage without her, and even instructed the navy, which she eventually sent north to act as though independently of her instructions – a subterfuge with which the Admiral, William Winter, would have nothing to do. 11 She

dithered and procrastinated about sending offi cial assistance to the rebels in the Low Countries after William of Orange's assassination in 1584, both in the hope that it would not be necessary and because she disliked rebels, but moved eventually when the whole rebellion appeared to be on the point of collapse. Despite the reams of advice that she was given, Elizabeth always reserved the decisions in such matters to herself, and ultimately played her cards close, because it was not

in her interest to reveal the workings of her mind to anyone. That was one of the main reasons for her success – no man was really able to follow her thought processes, and that gave her the degree of control that she needed. It is diffi cult to say how consciously this strategy was adopted and at this distance simulated indecisiveness and real uncertainty are very hard to tell apart. Her councillors had to accept what they could see. Her behaviour over the signature of the death warrant for Mary Queen of Scots sums up nearly two decades of ambiguity and hesitancy, most of which seems to have been genuine.

12

At fi rst, when the Scottish Queen had arrived in England in 1568, Elizabeth had wanted her restored on certain conditions. For example, she had to ratify the Treaty of Edinburgh of 1560, upon which the whole state of Anglo-Scottish relations depended. However the Earl of Moray, the Scottish Regent, had gone too far to retreat. Mary had been deposed in favour of her young son and no English interference could be allowed to overturn that situation. Without ceasing to press her case, Elizabeth accepted this situation, and took refuge in a verdict of

'non-proven' over the charges against Mary in respect of her husband's death, in order to keep her options open. The Scottish Queen's involvement in the Ridolfi plot in 1571, however, cooled Elizabeth's enthusiasm for her restoration, and in 1573 she intervened on behalf of the then Regent, the Earl of Morton against the 'Castillians' as Mary's party in Scotland were called. From then on a battle of wills developed between the Queen, who did not cease to regard her guest as the lawful Queen of Scotland, and her council led by William Cecil, and later by Francis Walsingham, who wanted her put on trial and preferably executed. She was, as Cecil repeatedly pointed out, the focus and fi gurehead of every Catholic plot, a danger to Elizabeth's life and to the stability of her realm. At fi rst Mary had campaigned hard to be recognized as Elizabeth's heir and that the Queen never specifi cally rejected, but as the years passed, and she came to rely more on Philip of Spain and less upon her Guise kinsfolk in France, the focus of her ambitions changed. Mary never specifi cally claimed

to be the lawful Queen of England – she was in no position to do so – but in countenancing plots such as those of Francis Throgmorton and Anthony Babington, she made the real nature of her target clear enough. At length, and following the Babington plot of 1586, Elizabeth was no longer prepared to fi ght against the logic of the evidence, and agreed to put her on tr

ial.13 She also proclaimed Mary's guilt when the verdict went against her but never ceased to regard her as a kinswoman and an anointed Queen. What then happened is reasonably clear. Elizabeth became reconciled to the fact that Mary must die but was desperately anxious not to have to answer for her death before the forum of European opinion. She tried every expedient to evade the responsibility, even (apparently) suggesting privy assassination. 216

When that did not work, she signed the death warrant, allowed it to be issued and then used every trick in her histrionic repertoire to pretend that she hadn't. She sulked and stormed, committing the faithful William Davidson to the Tower and rusticating her oldest and most trusted adviser, Lord Burghley, from the court and council. She may have been genuinely distressed at the course that she had been compelled to take, but it was a distress caused by a feeling that she was no longer in control of events, rather than by any particular sympathy with Mary. She also, of course, had an eye on the young King James of Scotland, who might well be distressed by his mother's fate and whom the Queen had already identifi ed as her likely successor.

When it came to myth making, Mary won that particular contest hands down. Her exit from the world was as dignifi ed and as emotive as her most ardent admirer could have wished and, despite her uncertain relations with the Church, she was soon enrolled as a Catholic martyr. Elizabeth was completely upstaged. However, it would be an exaggeration to say that Mary was more dangerous dead than alive. Because her son was of the reformed faith, her particular brand of Catholic legitimacy died with her and James's claim was, quite specifi cally, not affected by the manner of his mother's death. Although Mary may have won the romantic battle, Elizabeth won the political one because the residual Catholic claim then devolved upon the Infanta Clara Eugenia, Philip II's daughter, who had much less appeal to the recusant constituency, especially in view of the fact that England and Spain were at war.

Elizabeth hated war. Whatever she might think of her gender limitations in other contexts, war was not a woman's world. It was not that she did not understand the issues but rather that she had to concede strategic command to the men who were actually leading the fl eets and armies that operated in her name, and she disliked that intensely. It made sense to do as much of the fi ghting as possible at sea, because Scotland was (roughly) friendly and in every other direction the sea was a moat, but there was also another reason. Men like Hawkins, Drake and Frobisher, who commanded at sea, were not magnates and they did not pretend to military resources of their own. They showed an infuriating tendency to ignore instructions but they

always did so at a safe distance and they had the measure of their Spanish enemies in a way which none of her soldiers could pretend. Although it was necessary to hold musters from time to time, and to organize the counties for their own defence – fi eld armies were best kept small, best sent overseas, and best commanded by professional soldiers of the second rank. In spite of her tendency to keep these commanders short of resources, there was sense in this strategy. Both Sir John Norris in Brittany and Lord Mountjoy in Ireland were reasonably successful, whereas when the Queen yielded to the

pressure of circumstances and used noblemen abroad, they regularly failed. The Earl of Leicester made a complete mess of his tour of duty in the Low Countries in 1585–6, and so did the Earl of Essex in Normandy in 1591. Essex in Ireland in 1599 was even more of a disaster and if he had not been so comprehensively inept might have posed a threat to the Crown. Only the same Earl's role in the successful raid on Cadiz in 1596 provides a partial exception, and then the fl eet was under the command of Lord Charles Howard.

Elizabeth contrived to fi ght a long and reasonably successful war without ever yielding entirely to military priorities. Military men like Essex and Howard became important in the council, but management remained in the hands of civilians – fi rst Lord Burghley and then his son Sir Robert Cecil. This was a balancing act of considerable skill, considering the fi nancial demands that the war was making and the constant need to resort to Parliament for subsidies. By 1601 Elizabeth's combination of 'Virgin mother' rhetoric and gendered posturing was wearing a little thin but it continued to serve her and she did not have to meet another parliament in the last two years of her life. The supreme test of the Queen's mettle had come in 1588, when an invasion by the Duke of Parma from the Netherlands was generally expected. The fi eld army raised to oppose him amounted to no more than 12,000 or 14,000 men, either because the great majority of able men were held back for local defence, or because, even in an emergency, Elizabeth was reluctant to have a larger army present on home soil. Their effectiveness may well be doubted, but not their loyalty, and when she acted the part of commander in chief, they cheered her to the echo. She is alleged to have said:

My loving people, I have been persuaded by some that are careful of my safety to take heed how I committed myself to armed multitudes for fear of treachery, but I tell you that I would not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear!

… I am come among you at this time … being resolved in the midst and heat and heat of battle to lay down for my God and for my kingdom and for my people mine honour and my blood even in the dust. I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have

the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England to

o …14

It was all stirring stuff and given point by the fact that she was dressed in armour, like a latter day Joan of Arc. The words are reported and may not be strictly authentic but the sentiment is and it is consistent with her whole approach to her monarchy. By the time that she spoke at Tilbury the battle of Gravelines was over and the main danger had been averted but she may not have known that and her audience certainly did not.

15 Elizabeth's military strategy, like this speech, was broadly defensive. Tactically she might be the aggressor, as against Cadiz, 218

but her purpose was always to protect the integrity and interests of England. The only exception to this generalization had come early in the reign, when she had allied with the Huguenots in France in an attempt to recover Calais. That uncharacteristic adventure in 1562–3, has been largely ascribed to the infl uence of Lord Robert Dudley, who was still much about the Queen at the time, and that may be so, because both William Cecil and the Marquis of Winchester are known to have advised against it. It ended in disaster and the lesson (if it was needed) was not lost upon Elizabeth. Thereafter she followed the double policy of allowing (and even encouraging) her seamen in their acts of piracy, while blandly denying any complicity and professing her continued desire for friendship with her 'good brother' of Spain. It is not surprising that he privately railed against such duplicity, which he attributed to her sex, ignoring the fact that his own great grandfather, Ferdinand of Aragon, had been even more adept at such tactics. Elizabeth improvised her methodology of government because the only available model, her sister Mary, was so unsatisfactory, and central to that improvisation was her religious faith. Nothing could be further from the truth than the traditional assumption that Elizabeth was a mere opportunist when it came to her relations w

ith God.16 She had conformed during Mary's reign because there was no sensible alternative. Her sister had subjected her to relentless pressure, which she resented bitterly, for the same reason that Mary herself had been pressed by Edward's council. Her profi le as the heir to the throne was very high, and she might well have served as a focus for overt resistance. Moreover after the summer of 1555 it appeared to be a question of when, rather than if, her time would come. Her friend and confi dant William Cecil did the same, with slightly less excuse because neither of them could see the point of making martyrs of themselves when the long-term prospects looked so promising. Both were therefore what John Knox disparagingly dismissed as 'Nicodemites'. It was all very well for him; he was safely in Geneva! No one really believed in Elizabeth's conversion. Her sister certainly did not and was unremitting in her hostility. However, conformity was conformity, and that had to suffi ce. The Protestants, meanwhile, continued to look to her as their white hope. When a monarch was unpopular, for whatever reason, the expectations of all the disgruntled focused upon the heir and Elizabeth became the recipient of all sorts

of hopes, not only of orthodox Protestants but also of radicals, of gentlemen out of service and of disaffected London merchants who felt cheated of their legitimate ambitions in Africa and the New World. She was, as one dissident observed, thought to be ‘a liberal dame, and nothing so unthankful as her sister’.17 When her time came, therefore, in November 1558, a great weight of expectation hung upon her. So great indeed that the religious persecution, which had still been blasting ahead

in the summer, came to an end without a word spoken. Although she made no policy statement and insisted upon the status quo being observed, no one had any doubt that Elizabeth's settlement would be very different from her sister's. The Protestant exiles began to return, and the incumbent catholic bishops rightly expected to have a fi ght on their hands.

The real nature of the Queen's intentions have been extensively, and rather unnecessarily, debated. She was not committed to her father's settlement, as Mary had claimed to be. She was a Protestant, brought up in the same schoolroom as her brother Edward, and as convinced as he was of the truth of reformed doctrine. On the other hand, she was quite well aware that the majority of her subjects did not share her views and the safest thing to have done would have been to restore 'religion as king Henry left it'. This she did not do, because her sense of duty to God was stronger than her political caution. A campaign of advice was carefully orchestrated by Sir William Cecil to reinforce her resolution in this respect, because Cecil was in wholehearted agreement with his mistress on this issue. A Protestant church was a

sine qua non at the beginning of 1559. The real questions were, exactly what kind of Protestant Church, and how was it to be achieved? In a sense the answers were clear. The church of Edward VI had operated under the Royal Supremacy and that agreed well with Elizabeth's sense of personal responsibility. Not all Protestants had been happy with that in the past and some would not be so now, but in the circumstances a bill of Supremacy was inevitable. Resort to Parliament was equally certain. Not only had both Henry and Edward carried out their reforms by statute but even Mary, who would have had every excuse for ignoring such Acts, had carefully repealed them before instituting her own settlement. Elizabeth, however, was a woman, and the Supremacy as Henry had exercised it was not only personal but quasiepiscopal. Under Edward the Council had exercised it, but both they and the king in whose name they acted, had been male. Mary had borne the title for a few months but without conviction and had got rid of it as soon as was practicable. There was simply no precedent for a woman to bear such a responsibility and much anguished debate

ensued. Eventually Elizabeth decided to take the title of

‘Supreme Governor’, implying an administrative rather than a spiritual function. In a sense this was a distinction without meaning, because the powers of the Queen to govern the Church were unaffected but it was a conciliatory gesture to those (Protestants as well as conservatives) who did not believe that any woman could exercise any sacerdotal function, even by deputy. Elizabeth did not allow herself to be inhibited by this limitation. She governed the Church through High Commission (which was, of course, entirely made up of men) but implicitly reserved to herself the fi nal decision on all matters, whether administrative or 220

doctrinal. Woe betide any misguided clergyman or pamphleteer who tried to teach her her business in that respect! Elizabeth soon demonstrated that just as it had been her duty to God to make such a settlement, it was a similar duty to defend it against any attempt at 'further reformation'.

The bill of supremacy passed the House of Commons almost without argument, which is an interesting comment on the supposed strength of Catholic sentiment in the country at the time and passed the House of Lords with only a handful of lay peers supporting the bishops in their dissent. The bill of uniformity, however, was a different matter, because in truth it satisfi ed nobody except the Queen and a handful of her councillors. By reintroducing the 1552

Prayer Book it offended all those who looked to Henry's Church for their model, while by making some small conservative concessions and leaving the way open for the retention of minimal vestments it contrived to offend the 'hotter sort' of Protestants just as much. This time there was argument in the Lower House but not suffi cient to cause the measure to be withdrawn or redrafted. In the Upper House, however, the opposition was resolute, and some 20 lay peers backed the bishops. Sir Nicholas Bacon, who presided as Lord Keeper, did not put the Bill to a vote so close was the division and the Queen took advantage of the approach of Easter to prorogue the sitting. What was she to do? Could the Supremacy be accepted without the Protestant Uniformity? It is clear that Elizabeth decided that it could not and that the issue must be tried again. During the recess a disputation was set up between the 'old sort' and the 'new' and some sharp practice was resorted to in order to remove two of the Catholic bishops for contempt. This was managed by William Cecil, and it is not certain that the Queen was privy to the device; but when the parliament reconvened, Bacon put the controversial Bill to a vote and got it through with a majority of one!

Thus were the Queen's wishes fulfi lled. By the summer of 1559 she had her own Church, and a royal visitation set out on the task of implementation. One by one the conservative bishops refused to subscribe and were deprived, much, it would appear, to the Queen's disappointment, although why she should have expected anything else is not clear. Nearly a dozen sees were vacant by earlier deaths and

Elizabeth therefore had a golden opportunity to shape her Church in accordance with her own wishes. She had deliberately chosen an Episcopal form of government because that corresponded to her own notions of propriety and always thereafter treated the bishops as her servants and agents. She had no concept of

iure divino episcopacy, and made it clear – to archbishop Grindal in particular – that she expected obedience, even where the liturgy and teaching of the Church were concerned. There was nothing simulated about this sense of unique responsibility. Elizabeth knew perfectly well that you did not pose in front

of God, even if you were the Queen of England. For a woman who is accused of constant dithering, her defence of her ecclesiastical settlement was determined and consistent. William Cecil, who for many years tried to nudge her in the direction of further reform, eventually came to understand this, and even to respect its wisdom. For ten years the Queen concentrated on getting as many of her conservative subjects 'on board' as possible and this worked remarkably well as the Catholic leadership debated how best to confront this remarkable woman. Then in 1570 the Pope made up their minds for them by excommunicating her and absolving her subjects of their allegianc

e.18 This had the very useful effect of making allegiance and Protestantism co-terminous and thus uniting the majority of her subjects behind the Church settlement. Whatever the English may have felt about women exercising spiritual jurisdiction, it had become the national way of doing things and was doubly useful in distinguishing the English Church from that which was run from Rome. God no doubt moved in mysterious ways, but England was – after all – the New Israel.

It was precisely because the bishops were her servants that she took such pains in selecting them. It was not easy because so many of the best candidates had dubious backgrounds in terms of dissent and serious doubts about the royal supremacy. At first William Cecil drew up endless lists of likely candidates, only to find that some were unacceptable to the Queen and others declined the preferment. Both Cecil and the Queen were anxious – for different reasons – to

'unlord' the bishops. Elizabeth wanted their revenues and Cecil wanted to persuade them to concentrate on pastoral priorities but it soon transpired that the best candidates were not willing to serve on those terms and the policy was rapidly modified to include attractive financial packages for those approached. Cecil did his level best to secure the reduction or remission of first fruits and usually succeeded, a method that must at least have had Elizabeth's tacit approval. Once Mathew Parker had been selected for Canterbury – and had accepted the offer – then his opinion also had to be taken into account and the

whole process became still more complicated. Cecil was also not the only patron with the Queen's ear and although his advice usually prevailed he knew better than to presume upon that infl uence. There were often long vacancies. Oxford was famously without an incumbent (save for one year) from 1557 to 1589. That was an extreme case, and the average vacancy was about a year but it underlines the diffi culty that the Queen and Council had in fi nding suitable candidates. There is no evidence that Elizabeth's gender had any infl uence at all on this process, although it is possible that some of the early candidates may have balked at the idea of serving a female Supreme Governor. Nor is it true that the Queen was particularly averse to married bishops. She is alleged to have snubbed

Parker's wife and to have expressed a general discontent with married clergy, but it is safe to say that she never allowed any consideration of status to inhibit the promotion of a man who was suitable in other ways. It is quite probable that she preferred her clergy celibate, just as she preferred a modest level of ornamentation in churches, and liked Church music, but none of this inhibited her fi rm commitment to a bench of bishops who often held very different v

iews.19

The one thing that was not negotiable was her personal control over the Church which she had done so much to create.

There were very few biblical images of female power. The Virgin Mary was traditionally the principal female role model in the Church, but she was a symbol of submission and dependence rather than authority. Moreover she was seriously out of fashion in Protestant theology, because of a late medieval tendency to elevate her role as an intercessor – even to equate her with the Godhead. Although it is possible that the Queen's 'personality cult' may have taken over the role vacated by the Virgin in the minds of some laymen, it is safe to assume that that was never part of Elizabeth's intention. It was consequently the fi gure of Deborah, the Judge of Israel, who was drafted in to serve the Queen's need of a godly image. This happened very early. During her coronation entry into London in January 1559, one of the pageants portrayed 'Deborah, with her estates, consulting for the good government of Israel' and the verses that the child presenter spoke bore obvious reference to the regime change that had recently taken place: Jabin, of Canaan king, had long by force of arms

Oppressed to Israelites; which for GOD'S people went:

But GOD minding, at last, for to redress their harms,

The worthy Deborah as Judge among them sent …

20

This was clearly an attempt, soon to be supported by John Aylmer's

Harborow for True and Faithful Subjects, to fi ght the biblical fi re of

Knox's *First Blast* with an equal and opposite fi re drawn from the same uniquely authoritative source. The Queen's own attitude to this imagery can only be guessed, but she never attempted to inhibit its use and it must therefore be concluded that she approved. Her own taste in symbolic fi gures ran in a more courtly and classical direction. She was Astrea, Belphoebe, and above all Gloriana – the Fairy Queen of Edmund Spenser's courtly imagination.

She is the mighty Queen of Faerie,

Whose fair retrait I on my shield do bear,

She is the fl ower of grace and chastity,

Throughout the world renowned far and near,

My life, my liege, my Sovereign, my dear …

21

THE UNMARRIED SOVEREIGN

223

It was this kind of imagery that fuelled the Accession Day tilts, those secular celebrations of 17 November that were the creation of Sir Henry Lee in the 1570s. They were intended to be both fantasy and symbolic politics – designed to take the place of those religious festivals now banned by a Protestant government – the mystery plays and Corpus Christi processions. The German observer, Lupold von Wedel described one such joust in 1584:

The combatants had their servants clad in different colours … some of the servants were disguised like savages, or Irishmen, with the hair hanging down to the girdle like women, others had horses equipped like elephants, some carriages were drawn by men, others appeared to move by themselves … Some gentlemen had their horses with them, and mounted in full armour directly from the carriage …

22

Elizabeth loved these celebrations, and the fl attery that was laid on with a trowel. The Count of Feria had observed at the very outset of her reign that she was very vain, and loved the plaudits of the multitude. That did not change as she grew older; only gradually the genuine admiration for a clever and handsome young woman became a kind of sycophantic chorus – a ritual that every courtier was expected to observe. It is not clear that Elizabeth ever noticed the difference. It was not that she was unaware of the passing of the years. No mean poet herself, she wrote with a kind of wry humour, at some time in the 1580s: When I was fair and young, and favour graced me,

Of many was I sought, their mistress for to be,

But I did scorn them all, and said to them therefore,

‘Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere, importune me no more’

But there fair Venus’ son, that brave victorious boy,

Said ‘What, thou scornful dame, sith that thou art so coy,

I will so wound your heart, that thou shalt learn therefore: Go, go, go,

seek some otherwhere; importune me no more.

’23

Elizabeth was always acutely aware of her femininity, and never more so than when she was lamenting the high personal cost of keeping her authority and dignity intact.

The saddest postscript to this world of lost opportunity is to be found in the career of the Earl of Essex. Robert Devereux, the second Earl, was the Earl of Leicester’s stepson and was introduced by him to the court in 1584, when he was just short of 18. He was very handsome, had excellent manners and made an immediate impact. He went with his stepfather to the Low Countries in 1585

and it was there that he conceived an unwarranted conceit of himself as a great and dashing soldier. By the spring of 1587 he was clearly the coming favourite.

‘When she [the Queen] is abroad, nobody is near her but my Lord of Essex; 224

and at night my Lord is at cards, or one game or another with her [so] that he cometh not to his lodgings till the birds sing in the morning.

'24 Later that same year he became Master of the Horse, a position that the Earl of Leicester had resigned for that very purpose, and when Leicester died in the following year, he stepped into his shoes in more ways than one. He was never the Queen's lover in the sense that Robert had been but he became what would now be known as her 'toy boy', fulfi lling an emotional need in an ageing woman, and becoming in a sense the son that she would never have. Unfortunately Elizabeth's emotional tastes were never as discriminating as her political ones. In government she was served by William Cecil, Nicholas Bacon, Francis Walsingham, Christopher Hatton, Mathew Parker and John Whitgift. Only with Edmund Grindal did she make a mistake. However, those to whom she was personally attached were (fi rst and foremost) Robert Dudley, a man of erratic judgement and more charm than good sense, secondly, and briefl y, Francois duc d'Anjou, a disaster in every sense of the word, and fi nally Robert Devereux, a man of monumental conceit and no sense of reality.

Robert made the mistake of trying to turn his personal favour into political power. He believed that he was a great general and a powerful patron, neither of which was true. He had no success in the latter capacity because the Queen (quite rightly) did not trust his judgement but he chose to blame his failure on the machinations of Sir Robert Cecil, Lord Burghley's son, and set up a damaging feud on that basis. In the former mode his only real success was the taking of Cadiz, which he did his best to ruin by quarrelling with the Lord Admiral. He then painted himself into a corner over the appointment of a new Lord Deputy for Ireland, and got into the position where he could not avoid taking the responsibility himself. He went to Ireland in a foul mood, made a complete mess of his mission and returned to England without the Queen's leave, taking advantage of his privileged status to invade the Privy Chamber at an unseasonable hour. A more comprehensive programme of self-destruction could hardly be imagined yet he continued to blame his subsequent disgrace on Sir Robert Cecil. For years Elizabeth had been by turns intrigued and exasperated by his behaviour but this time exasperation had scored a defi nitive victory. She refused to renew his sweet wine monopoly,

thus ruining his extravagant fi nances and convincing his unstable mind that he was the victim of a diabolical plot. The result was his abortive

coup d'état of February 1601, a sequence of events that reveals conclusively how unreal his self-image had become. He seems to have imagined that London would rise in response to the appeal of one who (in 1596) had been its hero. When it did not stir he was left with no alternative to surrender – no doubt hoping that the embers of the Queen's affection might be rekindled to save him. However, he had

gone too far. His offence was treason and he paid the price. It was only when he was dead and buried that regrets came fl ooding in upon Elizabeth. It is alleged that she never recovered from the need to execute her one-time favourite and she died about two years later

.25 Essex's fate is an extremely sad postscript to an emotional life that was constantly misjudged and constantly frustrated. It had only been her capacity, not always recognized either at the time or since, to keep her private and public lives separate, which turned Elizabeth's long reign from potential disaster to effective triumph.

It was Sir John Davies who observed that all affairs of state 'a stately form of dancing seem to bear'. In other words it was very hard to tell where the charades of courtly entertainment ended and the sober business of politics began. No man could have achieved that blend or overlap in the way that Elizabeth did. Her image, her histrionics and her whole style of government, were uniquely feminine. The men with whom she constantly had to deal were by turns fascinated, bewildered and infuriated by these methods and eventually she was living on borrowed time. By 1603 it had been 50 years since England had had a king and there was a great desire to return from uncertainty to a known quantity. James may have been a foreigner and was not at all warlike but Elizabeth had become a very tiresome old lady. Her paint and her wigs made a brave attempt to retain the beauty and mystery that had been her stock in trade, but those who knew her well were no longer deceived. The important thing is that she succeeded in doing, from the very beginning of her reign, what Mary had conspicuously failed to do and that was to create a distinctively female monarchy. Whether such an achievement could ever have survived marriage, we do not know but the indications are that Elizabeth thought not. At best, marriage would have muddied the waters by power sharing with her consort. At worst it would have turned her into a glorifi ed housewife and mother. Mary had suffered the former fate and although there would have been some advantages in the latter – most conspicuously an heir of her body – it did not correspond with Elizabeth's sense of duty. At the end of the day, God had given her England to rule and that demanded a total dedication that overrode any personal considerations:

But then I felt straightway a change within my breast;

The day unquiet was; the night I could not rest,

For I did sore repent that I had said before.

‘Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere; importune me no more.’

26

Perhaps, but the rewards had been considerable.

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Epilogue: Queens Since 1603

With the death of Elizabeth ‘the Great Queen’, the monarchy reverted to its masculine mode and so remained until 1689. The queens of James I, Charles I, Charles II and James II were all consorts in the traditional sense. With the possible exception of Henrietta Maria, the consort of Charles I, their political role was negligible. Anne, the Queen of James I, was the daughter of Frederick II of Denmark and had married him in 1589 when he was still James VI of Scotland. The alliance between Scotland and Denmark was a traditional one. By the time that he succeeded Elizabeth in 1603 she had already borne him fi ve children, of whom three were living, and was to bear him two more daughters who died in infancy. Apart from doing her duty as a mother, Anne’s most signifi cant act was her conversion to Catholicism, a move that triggered a modest fashion for Catholicism at court but had no noticeable impact on the King’s public policy. She died in 1619, by which time only two of their children, Charles and Elizabeth, were surviving: he the heir and she married to the Elector Frederick of the Palatinate – a marriage later to be of considerable dynastic signifi cance. James had wanted to use the marriage of his heir to heal the religious split in Europe that resulted in the Thirty Years’ War and had already (in 1619) turned his son-in-law into a fugitive. The idea was to negotiate Frederick’s restoration in return for a marriage between Charles and the Infanta of Spain. However, an ‘incognito’ visit by Charles to Spain in 1623 soon disillusioned him of that possibility. When James died in March 1625, his heir was still unmarried.

On 1 May, however, he wed Henrietta Maria, the 16-year-old sister of Louis XIII of France. Politically this was intended to keep France out of the Catholic Habsburg embrace, which appeared to the squeezing

the life out of Protestant Germany. France did indeed remain hostile to the Habsburgs but not for that reason. Unlike her mother-in-law, Henrietta Maria was an enthusiastic proselytizer for the Catholic Church and that was to cause the King a great deal of diffi culty and embarrassment, made worse by the fact that he loved her deeply. She bore him six children, three sons and three daughters and, when the civil war broke out in 1643, went to her home country to mobilize support for him. In that she failed, but she remained in France when Charles was 228

defeated and received her children as fugitives from the Commonwealth regime. She did not return to England when her son regained his throne in 1660 but died in France in 1666. Her daughter, Elizabeth, and son Henry were both dead by 1660, and daughter Mary was married to William II, Prince of Orange. Charles returned as King, and his brother James as Duke of York. Her remaining daughter, who shared her name, was married to Philip, Duke of Orleans in 1661. Once he was established on his throne, Charles II followed the precedent of his father and grandfather and contracted a diplomatic marriage – to the Portuguese Princess Catherine of Braganza, the daughter of John IV. Although she was a Catholic and a member of an ancient house, her impact on England was virtually confi ned to the fact that she remained childless, which resulted in the Exclusion Crisis over the rights of the King's Catholic brother, James, to succeed him. James II, who became king on 6 February 1685, married twice. As Duke of York, and still nominally at least a Protestant, he wed Anne Hyde, daughter of the Earl of Clarendon, in September 1660. That union produced eight children, but only two, Mary and Anne, survived beyond infancy. His fi rst wife died in March 1671, and in September 1673 (by which time he had revealed himself to be a Catholic) he married for a second time, his bride on this occasion being Mary of Modena, the daughter of an Italian Duke. James's catholicizing policies made him deeply unpopular but at fi rst he succeeded in crushing rebellions both in England and Scotland. However, the birth of the couple's fi rst son, James, on 10 June 1688

focused minds against him. In November the husband of James's daughter by his fi rst wife, William III of Orange, was invited to replace the Catholic monarch –

who now had a Catholic heir. James fl ed, taking his wife and infant son with him. In 12 years of exile, before his death in 1701, Mary bore him seven more children, but only one, a daughter, survived infancy. While her husband had been king, Mary had kept the style of a queen but her only importance in the political life of the country was due to the belated arrival of her fi rst son. William of Orange, who was accepted as King on 13 February 1689, had a claim in his own right, derived from his mother, Mary, the sister of Charles and James, while his wife (also Mary) was, as we have seen, the daughter of James by

his fi rst, and Protestant, marriage. They had married in 1677 and because of the unique circumstances, were proclaimed jointly King and Queen. Mary II thus became England's third sovereign lady. However, the circumstances were quite different from those of 1558. Although William and Mary were granted the sovereignty for their joint and several lives, it was William who possessed the sole and full exercise of the royal power. When he was in Ireland, or the United Provinces, she acted on his behalf, but in virtue of the statute of 2 William and Mary c.6, rather than in her own right. In fact it is somewhat misleading to

describe her as a ruling Queen. No doubt that would have happened if she had outlived her husband but in the event she died childless in 1694 and William ruled on his own (in theory as well as in fact) until his death in March 1702. Anne, Mary's sister, had withheld her claim on Mary's death, allowing the statutory settlement to prevail until William died when she succeeded in her own right, and thus became England's fourth sovereign lady. She had been married since 1683 to George, the son of Frederick III of Denmark but he was not accorded the Crown Matrimonial, remaining simply as consort until his death in 1708. She famously became pregnant no fewer than 18 times but bore only one son who survived beyond infancy and he had died aged 11 in 1700, two years before she became Queen. Anne exercised very considerable political infl uence but was not a personal ruler in the same sense that Elizabeth had been. By this time the monarchy was constitutional in the sense that executive decisions were made by her council and ministers rather than by the Queen. The 'party' system in Parliament was still undeveloped, but it was necessary that her chief ministers should be able to command a majority for all those numerous issues that required a parliamentary decision. It was a period of military success and great commercial expansion, but little of this was due to the Queen's personal initiative. With the passage of the Act of Union with Scotland in March 1707, she became the fi rst sovereign of a united Great Britain. This was a period of constitutional development, which might have proved more diffi cult with a man on the throne, particularly one concerned to defend his position. Anne's passivity was gently satirised at the time by Alexander Pope who wrote:

Here thou, great Anna, whom three realms obey,

Doth sometimes council take – and sometimes tea.

When Anne died in 1714, her Francophile cousin James being a strong Catholic, the political arbitrators delved into the past and remembered that George, the Elector of Hanover, was the grandson of that Elizabeth who had married the Elector Palatine in 1617. Although his accession was not undisputed, he became king in succession to Anne in August 1714, and the constitutional procedure for determining the succession was vindicated. The 'Old Pretender' as James came to be

known, was defeated in the following year.

George had married in November 1682, without reference to his English prospects, which did not exist at that time. His wife was Sophia Dorothea, the daughter of the Duke of Luneburg-Celle but, apart from producing a son and a daughter within the space of fi ve years, the marriage was a failure. Both partners embarked on affairs and in 1694 Sophia's lover was murdered. George then divorced and imprisoned her in Germany, so by the time he came to Britain 230

he was effectively unmarried (although not unaccompanied). In fact the Act of Settlement of 1701 had named his mother, the Electress Sophia as next heir after Anne, but she had died in 1713, devolving her claim upon her son. Thus England had narrowly avoided having another ruling queen but was left without a fi rst lady until George died in 1727. He had succeeded his father as Elector of Hanover in 1698 and held both titles thereafter, paying altogether seven visits to his German lands during his time as King, on the last of which he died. The fi rst George never learned to speak English, his son (also George) acting as his interpreter, but it did not matter greatly as executive decisions were by that time fi rmly in the hands of the offi ce that would shortly be known as that of the Prime Minister. The second George had married in 1705, naturally among the German princely families, his wife being Caroline, the daughter of John Frederick, the Margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach. By the time that he succeeded, at the age of 43, George and Caroline had had nine children, of whom seven survived infancy. He chose to be crowned jointly with his Queen and the ceremony took place at Westminster on 11 October 1727.

George II reigned until 1760, dying at the age of 77 and outliving both his wife and his eldest son, Frederick, who died in March 1751. His reign saw several wars, important colonial expansion, particularly in India, and the Jacobite rebellion of 1745. The latter, which briefl y looked dangerous, was the last attempt to replace the exiled and Catholic Stuarts on the British throne. Its leader, the grandson of James II, known as ‘bonny Prince Charlie’, died an alcoholic wreck in Italy in 1788. For a number of years George was notoriously at odds with his eldest son, whose ‘Leicester House set’ contributed signifi cantly to the development of party politics. By this time the King’s political power was reduced to infl uence and he was no more effective as a personal ruler than Anne had been. As became the wife of a constitutional monarch, Caroline confi ned herself very largely to social and domestic duties. When George II died he was succeeded by his grandson, George III, who at the time of his accession was 22 and unmarried. This latter defi ciency was remedied within a matter of weeks, when he took to wife yet another German princess, this time Charlotte of Mecklenburg Strelitz. At fi rst George intervened a good deal in politics, attempting to manipulate Parliament in a way to

which neither his grandfather nor his great grandfather had aspired. His immensely long reign (he lived until 1820) saw the loss of the American colonies, the consolidation of the second British Empire in India, and the wars against the French Revolution and Napoleon. Charlotte proved to be an exemplary Queen, having no political ambitions (except on her husband's behalf) and falling pregnant about every 18 months from 1760 to 1783. The couple had altogether 15 children, of whom only two died young, and this

unprecedented success rate entitles Charlotte to a special place in the chronicles of the English Queens. George, unfortunately, outlived his own wits and had become incapacitated by 1811, when his eldest son became Prince Regent, until his own succession as George IV in 1820.

George III had been a model of probity, both sexual and fi nancial, so his son, almost inevitably, was the reverse. His debts created a scandal as early as 1783

and by the time that he became Prince Regent they amounted to the staggering sum of over £500,000. In 1785 he secretly married Maria Fitzherbert, but his nuptials were not recognized, and ten years later, much against his will, he was forced into marriage with his cousin, Caroline of Brunswick. Although she bore him a daughter, they quickly separated and lived in bitter estrangement for over 20 years. When he was crowned on 19 July 1821, Caroline attempted to gatecrash the ceremony on the grounds that she was George's lawful wife – which was true. She was ejected and died about three weeks later. By then, however, she had won one important victory, because George had publicly charged her with adultery, a charge that he was forced to abandon in the House of Lords, along with the bill of Pains and Penalties, which he had aimed against her. For the ten years of his reign there was consequently no Queen, and the monarchy as an institution was in serious discredit.

From this it was to some extent rescued by the succession of his younger brother, George III's third son, who took the title of William IV. William had embarked upon a career in the navy but in 1787, when he was 24, he was created Duke of Clarence and decided to take his seat in the House of Lords. Like his brother he had a taste for unsuitable women but he was at least faithful to his mistress. For about 20 years he co-habited with an actress named Dorothy Jordan and they produced ten children. When eventually, at the age of 53, he decided that he must marry, it meant perforce choosing a woman of his own rank, and in 1818 he wedded Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen, yet another German princess, who was 25. In spite of the difference in their ages (to say nothing of nationalities), their marriage was a happy one but all their three children died young. William had never thought of himself as a potential king but even before his marriage, the death

of George's only legitimate child, Charlotte, left him second in line, behind his older brother, Frederick Duke of York, and when Frederick died in 1827, William became the heir. Succeeding on 26 June 1830, he was crowned jointly with Adelaide in September 1831. He reigned for only seven years, but they were momentous in terms of British constitutional development, witnessing the passage of the fi rst (and most crucial) Reform Bill. Adelaide was a faithful shadow, performing her social duties gracefully and with aplomb but making no impact outside the palace circle. When William died on 20 June 1837, she was 232

destined for a long and placid retirement. William was succeeded by his niece, the 18-year-old Victoria, the daughter of George III's fourth son, Edward Duke of Kent, who had died in 1820, just a year after her birth. Victoria was England's fi fth, and Great Britain's second, ruling queen. She presided over most of the Industrial Revolution and the zenith of the British Empire and restored the tarnished prestige of the monarchy, less by what she did than by virtue of who she was. She also enjoyed the longest reign of any English or British monarch to date, dying 63 years later at the age of 81.

Victoria's political position was entirely defi ned by those statutes and customs that were collectively known as the British Constitution. Her power was confi ned to relationships with her ruling ministries, which by this time were returned to Parliament by means of general elections, and particularly with successive Prime Ministers. In theory the Privy Council was by this time purely advisory and mainly a means of keeping the monarch informed about decisions that were being made elsewhere. In practice, as time went on, the Queen had more political experience than any of her ministers and her guidance was often sought, but her main role was that of a fi gurehead and symbol. This was particularly demonstrated in 1876 when she assumed the title 'Empress of India' but it was also true nearer to home. In February 1840, Victoria married Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg Gotha, and it was a genuine love match. Albert quickly established himself in favour with the British people and they produced ten children over 17

years, although it was 1857 before he was accorded the title by which he is best known – that of Prince Consort. Albert did not attempt to interfere in politics but busied himself with good works and public charities, earning a deserved reputation for acumen and good sense. When he died in 1861 the Queen was devastated, and became a virtual recluse for a number of years, until her ministers eventually succeeded in recalling her to a sense of duty. All Victoria's children lived to become adults and most married, as a result of which she became known as the 'Grandmother of Europe'. Victoria was not called upon to govern in the way that the fi rst Elizabeth had done but her gender made her an equally potent symbol – in her case of motherhood rather than virginity. In effect she reinvented the

monarchy after its years of discredit under her uncle George IV, and effectively frustrated the republican movements that were strong in England at the beginning of her reign.

Her son, who took the title Edward VII (although he was usually known as

'Bertie') had waited 60 years for his chance to rule. He had married in 1863, his bride being Alexandra, the daughter of Christian IX of Denmark. It was a happy union, despite his well-publicized affairs, and she bore him six children between 1864 and 1871, but devoted herself largely to her children and to charity work,

playing no part in her husband's public life. This continued after his accession, when the Queen presided over state entertainments, but otherwise kept in the background, continuing to be mainly a patron of good causes. When Edward died in May 1910, Alexandra survived him, and he was succeeded by his eldest remaining son, who took the title George V. George had married in 1893 with Princess Mary of Teck, and was 45 when he succeeded his father. During the First World War he changed his family name from Saxe Coburg Gotha to Windsor for obvious patriotic reasons and is sometimes therefore misleadingly described as being the fi rst ruler of a new dynasty. Mary later acquired the reputation of being something of a dragon but that was purely in a domestic context. Just as her husband was a constitutional king so she was a self-effacing queen. Her only political action came after her husband's death in 1936, when she intervened decisively against her son's plans to marry the American divorcee, Wallis Simpson. Edward VIII had won golden opinions as Prince of Wales but he came to the throne unmarried at the age of 42. A constitutional crisis followed when it became clear what his matrimonial plans were. Both his government and his family were bitterly opposed to the move on the grounds that a woman with Mrs Simpson's background and antecedents could not possibly know how to behave as Queen. The democratization of the monarchy, which had been noticeable since the death of Victoria, had only gone a certain distance. Morganatic marriage was unacceptable and it was unthinkable that so uniquely placed a lady should have been through the divorce courts. After less than a year on the throne, and without having undergone a coronation, Edward abdicated in favour of his younger brother, who took the title of George VI.

George and his wife Elizabeth, of the Scottish family of Bowes Lyon helped to steer Britain through the traumas of the Second World War and again reinvented the monarchy in a domestic mode. This was largely the work of the Queen who developed a talent for high profi le family life, which set an agenda for two whole generations of Britons. George died in 1952, but his widow survived him for more than 50 years, becoming eventually the best loved as well as the most durable member of the royal family. George was succeeded by his elder daughter Elizabeth II, who thus became England's sixth and Great Britain's third ruling Queen. At the time of her accession she was

already married to her remote kinsman, Philip Mountbatten. Philip was never accorded the title of Prince Consort (let alone King) but was created Duke of Edinburgh, which title he retains. The couple have four children, of whom the oldest, Charles, has been Prince of Wales since 1958. Despite the 'New Elizabethan' rhetoric of the 1950s, there is no comparison between the position of the present monarch and that of her predecessor and namesake. The fi rst Elizabeth was the head of 234

government as well as the head of state. As such, although she was constrained by certain laws and customs, she was answerable only to God and not in any sense to her people. The present Elizabeth is not the head of any government and her political power is largely confi ned to an infl uence based on vast experience and a shrewd understanding of the world. The profi le of the monarchy is high, but it is so largely for formal and ceremonial reasons. It no longer makes much difference whether the incumbent is male or female, because the symbolism is that of the offi ce rather than the person – which was not so even as late as the reign of Victoria. The image of the Royal family as a cosy domestic unit, so assiduously cultivated by the late Queen Mother, has now largely disappeared, as fi rst the Queen's sister Margaret, and then three of her four children, were divorced from their partners. Paradoxically, this has brought the Queen closer to her people, for whom such experiences have become routine. The monarchy no longer has a mystique but it does have a practical utility. The Queen is still the head of the Commonwealth, that international club that evolved out of the British Empire and an hereditary succession still seems the most sensible way to fi ll a position which is largely symbolic. By comparison, the idea of regular presidential elections and of an executive power divided between an elected President and an elected assembly has little appeal. What the fi rst Elizabeth might have thought of her successor's reduced circumstances does not bear thinking about. The position of Queen Consort has been untested for over half a century, during which there have been dramatic social and conceptual changes. Whether the present Duchess of Cornwall will ever become Queen Consort is a matter of uncertainty and if she does what the responsibilities of that position might entail has still to be tested. The monarchy is still evolving, but it is reasonably certain that the role of the Queen as the defender of her husband's honour has been consigned to history.

Notes

Notes to Introduction

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3 E.T.,

The Lawes Resolution of Women's Rights, or the Lawes Provision for Woemen, (1632).

4 Joanna L. Chamberlayne,

English Queenship, 1445–1503, York University Ph.D. thesis, (1999), p. 2.

5 W.E.A.

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The Game and Play of Chess, (London, 1969), p. 27.

6 J.R. Lander, 'Marriage and Politics in the Fifteenth Century; the Nevilles and the Wydevilles',

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9 Henry

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12 House of Lords Record Offi ce, Original Acts. 1 Mary. Sess. 3, cap 1. 13 For a full, and sympathetic, discussion of her relations with Robert Dudley and their consequences, see Derek Wilson,

Sweet Robin: a Biography of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, 1533–1588 (London, 1981).

Notes to Chapter 1: The Queen as Trophy: Catherine de Valois 1 Agnes

Strickland,

Lives of the Queens of England (London, 1902), vol. III, p. 110. Strickland’s account of Isabella’s misdemeanours is highly coloured.

2 A.R. Myers, (ed.)

English, Historical Documents, 1327–1485, (1969/96), no. 113. Taken from T. Rymer (1704–35), *Foedera, conventiones, literae et cuiuscunque generis carta publica* (London), Vol. IV, iii, p. 179.

3

Calendar of the Close Rolls, 1419–22, (London), pp. 118–20. 4 *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004) ‘Catherine de Valois’ says that they did meet, but does not cite evidence.

5 For an account of the Southampton plot, see E.F. Jacob,

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6 Fabyan describes (among many other things) ‘a subtlety called a pelican sitting on his nest, with her birds, and an image of the said [St] Katherine holding a book and disputing with the doctors, holding a reason in her right hand saying “madame le royne” …’ Henry Ellis, (ed.)

New Chronicles of England and France by Robert Fabyan (London, 1811), pp. 586–7. 7 Ibid., p. 141. *Calendar of the Close Rolls* (p. 26) on the other hand, makes it appear that lands were assigned to the Queen from the Duchy and the Earldom. 8 There was a contemporary story to the effect that Henry had warned her (prophetically) not to go to Windsor for her lying in, lest their child should turn out unfortunate. She ignored the warning and is alleged to have repented bitterly at her death. 9 Rymer,

Foedera, vol. X, p. 204.

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11 N.H. Nicolas, (ed.)

The Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council (London, 1834–7), vol. V. p. 61.

12 BL Cotton MS Tiberius E.VIII, f.221.

13 G.E. Cokayne,

The Complete Peerage, (1910–49), *sub* Richmond. 14 Ibid.

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2 J. Stevenson, (ed.),

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5 C. Brown, 'Lydgate's Verses on Queen Margaret's Entry into London',

Modern Language Review, (1912), vol. VII, pp. 225–34.

6 J. Stacey, et al.,

Rotuli Parliamentorum, (London, 1767–77), Vol. V, pp. 73–4. 7 Stevenson,

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Strickland,

Lives of the Queens of England, (London, 1902), Vol. III, p. 109. 10 J.S. Davies, (ed.), *An English Chronicle of the Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V and Henry VI*, (London, 1856), pp. 116–18.

11 Stevenson,

Narratives, I, pp. 198–201.

12 Ibid, pp. 243–64.

13 A.L. Brown, 'The King's Councillors in Fifteenth Century England',

Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, (1969), pp. 95–118.

14 This complaint was directed at the alleged factional use of legal process as a means of pursuing personal quarrels.

15 A.R. Myers, 'The Household of Margaret of Anjou, 1452–3',

Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, (1957–8), vol. XL, pp. 70–113,

391–431.

16 Strickland,

Queens of England, vol. III, p. 212. 17 Davies, *An English Chronicle*, p. 78.

18

English Historical Documents, Vol. IV, p. 272

19 N. Davis (ed.),

Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, (Oxford, 1971–6), vol. II, p. 108.

20 C.A.J. Armstrong, 'Politics and the Battle of St Albans, 1455',

Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Reasearch, (1960), vol. XXXIII, pp. 1–72. 21 Ibid.

22 E.B. Fryde, et al., (eds),

Handbook of British Chronology, 3rd edn, (London, 1986), pp. 87, 95, 107.

23 Strickland,

Queens of England, vol. III, p. 225. 24 *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, vol. V, p. 375. Davies, *English Chronicle*, pp. 99–100. 25 *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, vol. V, pp. 375–83. The judges and law lords had pro nounced themselves incompetent to mediate in 'so high a matter of state'. 26 R.A. Griffi ths, *The Reign of KingHenry VI*, (London, 1981), pp. 870–1. While the battle of Wakefi eld was being fought, Margaret was at Lincluden in Scotland, seeking the help of Mary of Geldres. Helen Mauer, *Margaret of Anjou*, (London, 2005), op. cit. 27 Davies, *English Chronicle*, p. 110.

28 Rawdon Brown, et al.,

Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, (London, 1864–98), vol. I, p. 119. 29 Philippe de Commynes, *Memoires*, ed. J. Calmette and G. Durville, (1924–5), vol. I, p. 205.

30 J. Warkworth,

A Chronicle of the First Thirteen Years of the Reign of King Edward the

Fourth, ed. J. Halliwell, (London, 1839), p. 19.

Notes to Chapter 3: The Queen as Lover: Elizabeth Woodville 1 *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, (London, 1767–77), vol. IV, p. 498. *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1436–41*, (London, 1911), p. 53. The Duchess had recently been granted dower provided that she did not remarry without royal permission.

2 R.

Fabyan,

The New Chronicles of England and of France, ed. H. Ellis, (London, 1811), p. 654.

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The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London, (London, 1876), p. 226.

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de

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Anchiennes Cronicques d’Engleterre, ed. E. Dupont, (1858–63), 3 vols, vol. II, pp. 327–8.

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The Coronation of Elizabeth Woodville, (London, 1935), *Excerpta Historica*, ed. S. Bentley (London, 1831), pp. 176–212.

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11 A.R. Myers, 'The Household of Queen Elizabeth Woodville, 1466–7',

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12 A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley (eds),

The Great Chronicle of London, (London, 1938), pp. 204–8.

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Chronicle, ed. H. Ellis, (London, 1809), pp. 273–4. 14 Polydore Vergil, *Anglica Historia*, ed. D. Hay (London, 1950), n.s. 74, p. 125. 15 J. Warkworth, *A Chronicle of the First Thirteen Years of the Reign of King Edward the Fourth*, ed. J. Halliwell (London, 1839), p. 10.

16 Bruce, J. (ed.),

Historie of the Arrivall of King Edward IV, (London, 1838), p. 2. 17 Ibid., pp. 18–21.

18 Ibid., pp. 32–3.

19 D. Baldwin,

Elizabeth Woodville, (Stroud, 2002), p. 77. 20 John Stacey and Thomas Burdett, 'Croyland Chronicle' in W. Fulham (ed.) *Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores Veterum*, (Oxford, 1654), p. 561. 21 *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1476–85*, pp. 172–3. A petition to the parliament of 1478 by Ankarette's grandson and heir, Roger Twynho.

22 Dominic Mancini,

The Usurpation of Richard III, ed. C.A.J. Armstrong, (London, 1969), pp. 63, 111.

23

Calendar of State Papers, Milan, I, pp. 235–7.

24 W.H. Black,

Illustrations of Ancient State and Chivalry (London, 1840), pp. 27–40.
25 Mancini, *Usurpation*, p. 107. Mancini believed that he had caught a cold while out fi shing. The modern diagnosis is a stroke.

26 Ibid., pp. 74–5.

27 'Croyland Chronicle', p. 566. Charles Ross,

Richard III, (London, 1981), p. 74 and n. 28 With Lady Elizabeth Butler (née Talbot). Edward's own legitimacy was also impugned, despite the fact that his mother, Cecily, was still alive.

29

Great Chronicle, pp. 234, 236. The fact that Elizabeth supported the proposal to marry her daughter to the Earl of Richmond is also evidence that she believed her sons to be dead by the autumn of 1483.

30 W. Campbell (ed.)

Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII, (London, 1873–7), vol. II, p. 273.

31

Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1485–9, p. 302.

Notes to Chapter 4: The Queen as Helpmate: Elizabeth of York 1 Henry's claim came through his mother, who was the daughter of John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset. John was the son of the Earl of Somerset of the same name, and grandson of John of Gaunt via Katherine Swynford, his third wife. Henry IV was Gaunt's son by his fi rst marriage. The trouble with this pedigree was that Katherine's marriage had only been recognized posthumously, with a bar on claims to the throne. Of course it was possible to argue that the marriage had been valid all along and that therefore no such condition had force. This was the line that Henry's supporters took but it was not very convincing. There was, fortunately, no doubt about Henry's own legitimacy, despite the unusual nature of his parents' wedding.

2 Richard

Grafton's

Chronicle (1568) described it as 'a wrest to the harpe to set all the stringes in a monachorde and tune … by reason of which marriage peace was thoughte to descende out of heaven into Englande …' (London, 1809), pp. 159–60).

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Chronicle, p. 95.

4 William Fulman, (ed.),

Rerum Anglicorum Scriptores (London, 1684), pp. 567–8. 5 Ibid., p. 572.

6

Rotuli Parliamentorum, VI, p. 278.

7

Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, 1202–1509, p. 158. 8 *Calendar of the Papal Registers*, XIV (1960), pp. 1–2, 14–28. The Ricardian statute declaring (among other things) Elizabeth's bastardy, had been quietly repealed. 9 *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, VI. *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1494–1509*, p. 8. 10 *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1485–1494*, p. 369. 11 Ibid.

12 N.H. Nicolas, (ed.),

The Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York, (London, 1830). 13 Jasper was Chief Justice of North Wales at the time.

14 John Skelton,

Works, ed. Alexander Dyce (1843), I, p. 129. 15 T. Rymer, *Foedera, conventions, literae et cuiuscunque generis carta publica*, (1704–35), XII, p. 303.

16 Ibid, pp. 420–8. G.A. Bergenroth,

Calendar of State Papers, Spanish, (London, 1862) I, p. 21. 17 Ibid, pp.

714–9.

18 A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley,

The Great Chronicle of London, (London, 1938), p. 306. 19 C.L. Kingsford (ed.), *Chronicle of London*, (1905), p. 255. 20 Polydore Vergil, *Anglica Historia*, ed. Hay, p. 133. 21 Ibid.

22 Rymer,

Foedera, XII, pp. 635–6. S.B.Chrimes, *Henry VII*, (London, 1862), p. 284. 23 Ibid, p. 803.

24 Ibid, XIII, pp. 76–86.

25 In 1506 Ferdinand came to the rescue by formally accrediting her as his ambassador in England, thus giving her both status and function. It is not clear that her fi nancial situation was much ameliorated.

26 J. Gairdner (ed.),

Memorials of King Henry VII, (1858), pp. 223–39. 27 Rymer, *Foedera*, XIII, pp. 259–61.

28 Ibid, cited from the Venetian Ambassador.

Notes to Chapter 5: The Queen as Foreign Ally: Catherine of Aragon and Anne of Cleves

1 The ceremony itself created only a bar of what was called ‘public honesty’, which the dispensation did not cover. Wolsey later tried to exploit this omission. 2

Calendar of State Papers, Spanish, I, pp. 375–440. 3 De Puebla was intelligent and immensely experienced but he was now becoming elderly and infi rm. However, his real weakness was his lack of aristocratic status. Garrett Mattingly,

‘The Reputation of Dr De Puebla’,

English Historical Review, (1940), 55, pp. 27–46. 4 Fuensalida

eventually fell out with Catherine, much to his disadvantage. Duke of Alba (ed.), *Correspondencia de Gutierre Gomez de Fuensalida*, (1907). 5 Henry was created Prince of Wales on 18 February 1504, but after Arthur's death the Council in the Marches became moribund.

6 Edward

Hall,

Chronicle, p. 507.

7

Correspondencia de Gutierre Gomez de Fuensalida, pp. 518 *et seq*. 8 Ibid.

9 Hall,

Chronicle, p. 507.

10 Hall,

Chronicle, p. 52

11

Calendar of State Papers, Spanish, II, p. 44.

12 Grafton,

Chronicle, p. 238.

13

Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, ed. Rawdon Brown, et al. (London, 1864–98), II, p. 26.

14 Polydore Vergil,

Anglica Historia, p. 163.

15 Hall,

Chronicle, p. 532.

16

Calendar of State Papers, Spanish, Supplement, pp. 36–41. 17 *Letters and Papers*, I, no. 2391 (BL MS Cotton Cleopatra C.v, ff.64). J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, (London, 1968), p. 37.

18 Alfred Spont (1897),

Letters and Papers relating to the War with France, 1512–1513, Navy Records Society, documents 53, 54, 55.

19 BL Harleian MS 3504, f.232.

20 From an eyewitness account.

Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, II, p. 385. 21 *Letters and Papers*, III, nos 2333, 2360.

22 The banking house of Fugger was extremely important in this election because they were prepared to supply Charles with almost unlimited funds, which he used for the purpose of bribing the electors. They were repaid with the grant of silver mines in Silesia. 23 The More was one of Wolsey's residences, near Rickmansworth. 24 BL Cotton MS Vitellius C.i, f.23. D. Loades,

Mary Tudor: A Life, (Oxford, 1989), p. 36. 25 MS Vitellius C.i, f.23. She was under the supervision of the Countess of Salisbury as Lady Governess.

26 BL Cotton MS C.x, f.185. J. Sturtz and V. Murphy (eds),

The Divorce Tracts of Henry VIII, (Angers, 1988), p. xiii.

27 George Cavendish,

The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey, ed. R.S. Sylvester, (London, 1959), p. 83, citing the King's testimony to the Legatine Court in 1529. 28 Nicholas Pocock, *Records of the Reformation, The Divorce 1527–1533*, (London, 1870), 2

vols, Vol. I, p. 11.

29 Guy Bedouelle and Patrick Le Gal,

Le 'Divorce' du Roi Henry VIII, (Geneva, 1987), pp. 35–41.

30 Bedouelle and Le Gall,

Le 'Divorce', pp. 31–41. 31 Catherine directed a barrage of complaints over these delays to the Emperor, who became seriously irritated in consequence.

32

Letters and Papers, VI, no. 1296.

33 Ibid

. , VI, nos 89, 332, 311, 461, 495–6, 525, 529, 661. Cranmer's decision had been anticipated by Convocation on 5 April.

34 P.L. Hughes and J.F. Larkin,

Tudor Royal Proclamations, (London, 1964), vol. I, no. 140. 35 *Letters and Papers*, VII, no. 1208.

36 Ibid., VI, no. 807 and Appendix 3.

37 Statute 25 Henry VIII, c.22.

Statutes of the Realm, III, pp. 471–4. 38 *Letters and Papers*, XIV, I, no. 62.

39 Hughes and Larkin,

Tudor Royal Proclamations, I, no.190. 40 *Letters and Papers*, XIV, ii, no. 400. Her words were reported by the informer George Constantine.

41 Ibid., no. 286.

42 J. Strype (1822),

Ecclesiatical Memorials, (London, 1822) vol. I, p. 459. 43 Ibid, II, p. 462. D. Loades, *Henry VIII; Court. Church and Confl ict*, (London, 2007) p. 96. 44 Her last appearance in a court document came when she exchanged new year's gifts with the Queen on 1 January 1557. BL MS RP 294.

Notes to Chapter 6: The Domestic Queens: Anne Boleyn,

Jane Seymour and Catherine Parr

1 For the Boleyn pedigree, see J.C. Wedgewood and A. Holt

History of Parliament: Biographies, (London, 1936), pp. 90–1. S.T. Bindoff *Hours of Commons, 1509–1558*, (London, 1982), vol. I, p. 456.

2

Letters and Papers, III, no. 1762.

3 Hall,

Chronicle, p. 631. *Letters and Papers*, III, no. 1559. 4 *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, *1527–33*, p. 824. 5 Eric

Ives,

The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn, (Oxford, 2004).

6 S.W. Singer (ed.)

The Life of Cardinal Wolsey by George Cavendish, (London, 1827), pp. 424–5.

7 Ives,

Life and Death, p. 85.

8 The matrimonial history of Anne of Brittany had been even more compli cated. She married Charles VIII of France in 1491, despite both of them having been betrothed before 242

and in 1498 married his cousin and successor, Louis XII. The Pope dispensed all these impediments without diffi culty.

9 When the King unburdened his conscience to the City Fathers of London in November 1528, '… some sighed and said nothing … others that favoured the Queen much sorrowed that this matter was now opened.' Hall,

Chronicle, p. 755. 10 *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish*, IV, pp. 97, 121. Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 758. 11 *Handbook of British Chronology*. *Letters and Papers*, IV, no. 5996. 12 Ives, *Life and Death*, p.128.

13 R. Scheurer (ed.),

Correspondence du Cardinal Jean du Bellay, (1969), vol. I, 44 [p. 113]. 14 J.E. Cox (ed.), *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer* (London, 1846), p. 246.

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Calendar of State Papers Venetian, 1527–33, p. 870. 16 'The Coronation of Anne Boleyn' (1533) in A.F. Pollard, *Tudor Tracts* (Westminster, 1903), p. 19.

17 Ibid.

18

Letters and Papers, VI, no. 568.

19

Cal. Span. IV, ii, p. 510.

20 Statutes, 25 Henry VIII, c.19; 20, 21; 26 Henry VIII, c.1. 21 D. Loades (ed.),

The Papers of George Wyatt, (London, 1968), p. 185. 22 *Letters and Papers*, VIII, no.1013. Ives, *Life and Death*, p. 191. 23 Ibid., pp. 192–3.

24 Or even the autumn, depending on how premature the foetus of which she miscarried in February 1536 actually was. Rethan Warnicke (

The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn, (Cambridge, 1989) described it as 'of three and a half months'. 25 Abuse in common usage. See TNA SP1/88, f. 21, cited in G.R. Elton, *Policy and Police*, (Cambridge, 1972), p. 11.

26 G. Ascoli,

La Grande Bretagne devant l'opinon Francais, (Paris, 1927), lns 209–13. 27 Henry Clifford, *The Life of Jane Dormer*, (London, 1887), p. 79. 28 *Cal. Span.*, 1536–8, pp. 84–5.

29 George Wyatt, 'The Life of Queen Anne Boleigne' in Singer,

The Life of Cardinal Wolsey, p. 443.

30 T. Amyot (ed.), 'A Memorial from George Constantine', in

Archaelogia, (1831), 23, pp. 23, 64.

31 Mark Smeaton (a musician) was one of those accused of having 'had a do' with Anne Boleyn. Smeaton confessed (falsely) under torture.

32 Singer (ed.),

Wolsey, pp. 458–9. A letter from Sir Edward Baynton to Sir William FitzWilliam; both were commissioners investigating the charges against Anne and Norris. 33 *Wolsey*, ed. Singer, pp. 451, 457.

34 Charles Wriothesley,

A Chronicle of England, 1485–1559, ed. W.D. Hamilton (Camden Society), (London, 1875), vol. I, 189–91.

35 Strype,

Ecclesiastical Memorials, I, ii, p. 304. 36 Mary to Cromwell, 24 August 1538, *Letters and Papers*, XIII, no.174. This is a late example, but she had made her position clear the previous autumn.

37 Historical Manuscripts Commission,

Bath Papers, II, f.8. N O T E S T O PA G E S 1 3 4 – 1 5 2

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38

Letters and Papers, XX, i. no. 266.

39 John Foxe,

Acts and Monuments, (London, 1583), pp. 1242–4. 40 *Letters and Papers*, XIX, I, nos. 864, 1035 (78). 41 Statute 35 Henry VIII, c.1. *Statutes of the Realm*, III, pp. 955–8. *Notes to Chapter 7: The Queen as Whore: Catherine Howard* 1 Lacey Baldwin Smith, *A Tudor Tragedy*, (London, 1961), p. 9. 2 *Letters and Papers*, XVI, no. 1339. TNA, SP1/168, f.155. 3 It was the usual practice for aristocratic children of both sexes to be sent to live in friendly households, or other parts of the family, at about that age. Only later did it become normal to send sons to school.

4 Mannox swore that 'he never knew her carnally', but the truth was probably otherwise. TNA, SP1/167, f.138.

5

Letters and Papers, XV, no. 902. A week before they were married, there was a rumour that Catherine was pregnant.

6 J.G. Nichols (ed.),

Narratives of the Days of the Reformation (London, (1860), p. 260. 7 G.R. Elton, 'Thomas Cromwell's Decline and Fall', in G.R. Elton, *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Government and Politics*, (Cambridge, 1974), vol. I, 189–230. Susan Brigden

'Popular Disturbance and the Fall of Thomas Cromwell',

Historical Journal, (1981), 34, pp. 257–78.

8

Letters and Papers, XVI, no. 1426. H. Nicholas (ed.) *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England*, (London, 1837), VII, p. 355.

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Letters and Papers, IX, no. 612.

10 For example, TNA, SP1/167, f.14.

11

Letters and Papers, XV, no. 875. TNA, SP1/161, ff. 101–2. 12 John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, (1583), pp. 1177–91. 13 *Letters and Papers*, XVI, no. 1320. TNA, SP1/167, f.131. 14 Nicholas, *Proceedings and Ordinances*, VII, p. 353. 15 Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Bath Papers*, II, pp. 8–9. 16 *Bath Papers*, II, pp. 8–9.

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Letters and Papers, XVI, no. 1339. TNA, SP1/167, f.160. Jane Rochford's confession. 18 TNA, SP1/167, f.159. Thomas Culpepper's confession.

19 Statute 26 Henry VIII, c.13.

Statutes of the Realm, III, p. 508. 20 Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, pp. 1236–7.

21

Letters and Papers, XVI, no. 1426.

22

State Papers of Henry VIII (1810–28), I, ii, 167, p. 700. 23 *Journals of the House of Lords*, I, p. 171.

24 Henry Ellis,

Original Letters Illustrative of English History (1824–46) 1st series, II, pp. 128–9.

25

Letters and Papers, XVII, no. 63.

Notes to Chapter 8: The Queens who Never Were: Jane Grey and Mary Stuart 1 When Henry was excommunicated, the realm was placed under an interdict, which meant that no lawful marriages could be celebrated and that included the King's marriage to Jane Seymour. In the eyes of the Catholic Church, consequently, Edward was illegitimate. 2 The only realistic candidate was Catherine Grey, Jane's younger sister. However, she married the Earl of Hertford (who had been recognized in January 1559) without royal approval and was consequently imprisoned. She died in 1568.

3 Edward's Letters Patent were drawn up in due form, but there is no evidence that they ever passed the Great Seal.

4 There is no fi rm evidence for this shared education, but it is plausible in view of the similarity of their accomplishments, and the proximity of their upbringing. 5 Alison Plowden in

The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. 6 *Journals of the House of Commons* (1803–52), I, p. 9. *Acts of the Privy Council*, II, p. 262. 7 John ab Ulmis to Henry Bullinger, 31 December 1550. Hastings Robinson (ed.) (1847), *Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation*, Parker Society, pp. 425–7. 8 S. Brigden (ed.), *The Letters of Richard Scudamore*, (London, 1990), vol. XXX, p. 96. 9 W.K. Jordan (ed.), *The Chronicle and Political Papers of King Edward VI*, (London, 1966), pp. 68–9.

10 The Duke of Northumberland was Warden General of the Marches. BL MS Royal 18C 24, ff.235–6.

11 Jehan Scheyfve to the Emperor, 11 June 1553.

Calendar of State Papers, Spanish, XI, p. 50. 12 J.G. Nichols (ed.), *Literary Remains of King Edward VI*, (London, 1857) II, pp. 571–2. 13 *Historical Manuscripts Comission, 16th Report*, MSS of Lord Montague of Beaulieu, (1900), p. 5.

14 J.G. Nichols (ed.),

The Chronicle of Queen Jane, (London, 1850), p. 3. 15 Ibid, Appendix III.

16 Ibid, p. 12.

17 The two who were executed with him were Sir John Gates and Sir Thomas Palmer. BL

Harley MS 2194, f.23.

18

Chronicle of Queen Jane, pp. 24–5.

19 Ibid., p. 32.

20 Ibid, pp. 55–9.

21 This appears to have been on the initiative of the Cardinal, although Mary of Guise also visited her daughter in September 1550 to make sure that this duty was being discharged. Antonia Fraser,

Mary Queen of Scots, (1969), p. 51.

22 Letter of Nicholas Throgmorton to Elizabeth, January 1561. Cited by Antonia Fraser,

Mary Queen of Scots, p. 110

23 B.L. Cotton and M.S. Caligula B.IX, ff. 34, 38.

Calendar of State Papers relating to Scotland, 1559–60, pp. 413–5.

24 Although Mary was only 19 at the time of her return, she had already been declared of age in 1553, as part of the manoeuvrings

that conferred the regency on her mother. 25 T. Thompson (ed.),

Diurnal of Occurents, (Edinburgh, 1833), p. 74. The battle was at Corrichie.

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26 J.E.A. Dawson, 'William Cecil and the British Dimension of Early Elizabethan Foreign Policy',

History, (1989), 74, pp. 196–216.

27 J.E.A. Dawson, 'Mary Queen of Scots, Lord Darnley and Anglo-Scottish Relations in 1565',

International History Review, (1986), 8, pp. 1–24.

28 Randolf to Cecil, 19 February 1565. J Bain, (ed.),

Calendar of State Papers Relating to Scotland, 1563–69, (Edinburgh, 1898), pp. 126–7.

29 Ibid, p. 188.

30 Ibid., p. 216.

31 Bedford to Cecil, 30 December 1566.

Cal. Scot., 1563–69, p. 308. 32 Sir James Melville, *Memoirs of his Own Life*, ed. T. Thompson, (Edinburgh, 1827), p. 177. 33 Elizabeth's instructions to Throgmorton, 30 June 1567. *Cal. Scot., 1563–69*, pp. 339–40. 34 *Cal. Scot. , 1563–69*, pp. 438–40.

35

Calendar of State Papers, Rome, 1558–71, pp. 338, 349. Loades D., *Elizabeth I*, (London, 2006), pp. 175–7.

36

Calendar of State Paper, Spanish, 1558–1603, III, pp. 33–4. 37 Raphael Holinshed (ed.) *Chronicle*, (London, 1807–8), IV, p. 536. 38 Statute 27 Elizabeth I, c.1. *Statutes of the Realm*, IV, pp. 704–5. 39 The method involved the concealment of letters within the bungs of beer barrels. 40 B.L. Cotton and M.S. Caligula C.IX, f.459.

41 P.L. Hughes and J.F. Larkin,

Tudor Royal Proclamations, (London, 1969), vol. II, pp. 528–32.

Notes to Chapter 9: The Married Sovereign: Queen Mary I 1 The nearest in blood was Henry, Lord Darnley, aged about 8 years at this time. Darnley was the grandson of Margeret Tudors's second marriage to Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus. Edward Courtenay had a claim derived from his grandmother, Catherine, a daughter of Edward IV. Francis Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon, had a more remote claim still, going back to a niece of Richard, Duke of York, Edward IV's father. It is not surprising that none of these was pressed.

2 Foster

Watson,

Vives and the Renascence [Education of Women, (London, 1912). 3 B.L. Cotton and M.S. Vespasian, C XIV, f.246. Count Cifuentes to the Emperor, 8 October 1536. *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish*, V, p. 106. 4 Marillac to Francis I, 3 June 1542. *Letters and Papers*, XVII, no. 371. 5 *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, Edward VI, II, p. 20. The actual grant is dated 17 May 1548, with issues backdated to the previous Michaelmas, but there is good evidence that the arrangements were in place by the previous July.

6 Henry

Clifford,

The Life of Jane Dormer, Duchess of Feria, ed. J. Stevenson, (London, 1887), p. 63.

7 Emperor to Van der Delft (ambassador in England), 10 May 1549.

Cal. Span., IX, p. 350. 8 D. MacCulloch (ed.) 'Vita Mariae Angliae Reginae of Robert Wingfi eld of Brantham', *Camden Miscellany*, (1984), 28, p. 255.

9 'Vita Mariae Angliae Reginae',

passim.

10 Ibid., pp. 272–3.

11 P.L. Hughes and J.F. Larkin,

Tudor Royal Proclamations, (London, 1969), vol. II, p. 4. 18

August 1553.

12 Statute 1 Mary, st.2, c.2.

Statutes of the Realm, IV, p. 202. See also Henry Machyn, *The Diary of Henry Machyn*, ed. J.G. Nichols, (London, 1969), pp. 38–41. 13 Emperor to Philip, 30 July 1553. *Cal. Span.*, XI, p. 126. 14 In 1549 Charles had reorganized the 17 provinces of the Low Countries, which were all in theory part of the empire, into the Burgundian Circle, which he exempted from Imperial Law. He then arranged for the succession of each province to fall to Philip after his death or retirement, thus effectively detaching them from the empire altogether. This was much resented by his brother Ferdinand, who was due to succeed him in the Imperial title. 15 *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Philip and Mary*, no. 24. C.S. Knighton, *Mary*, (London, 1998) TNA SP11/1, no. 20.

16 Archivo General de Simancas, Estado Inglaterra, E807, f.36 (i).

Cal. Span., XII, pp. 4–6. 17 Statute 1 Mary, st.3, c.1 House of Lords Record Offi ce, Original Acts. 18 *Cal. Span.*, XII, p. 283.

19 ‘The copie of a letter sent into Scotlande …’ by John Elder.

The Chronicle of Queen Jane, ed. J.G. Nichols (London, 1850), Appendix X, p. 140.

20

Cal. Span., XIII, p. 11. Charles had, however, created his son king of Naples and Sicily ahead of the wedding, so that the match would be between ‘equals’. 21 For example, *La solenne et felice intrata delli serenissimi Re Philippo et Regina Maria d’Inghilterra* (Rome, 1555). There were similar works in Spanish, German and Dutch. 22 *Cal. Span.*, XIII, p. 33.

23 Giovanni Michieli’s ‘Narration of England’, 13 May 1557.

Cal. Ven., VI, p. 1057. 24 Cardinal Pole to Mary, 2nd October 1553,

Cal. Ven., V, p. 419. 25 *Cal. Span.*, XIII, 63–4.

26

Cal. Ven., VI, p. 10. Memorandum concerning church property. *Lords Journals*, I, p. 480. 27 For example, *Il felicissimo ritorno del regno d'Inghilterra alla cattolica unione* (Rome, 1555).

28 He prompted his confessor, Alonso de Castro, to preach against it. As de Castro had quite a record as a persecutor himself this did not carry much conviction. 29 Pole to Philip, 5 October 1555.

Cal. Ven., VI, pp. 205–6. Mary gave him a generous leaving present.

30 Such rumours were circulating in London as early as March. See the pardon of Alice Perwicke of London.

Cal. Pat., Mary, III, p. 184.

31 Badoer to the Doge and Senate.

Cal. Ven., VI, p. 212. 32 *Revised Short Title Catalogue* 3480, ed. W.A. Jackson et al. (London, 1976–86). John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, (Oxford, 1820), vol. III, pt ii, no xlv. 33 *Cal. Ven.* , VI, pp. 299–300.

34 Glyn Redworth (1997), '"Matters Impertinent to Women"; Male and Female Monarchy under Philip and Mary',

English Historical Review, 112, pp. 597–613. 35 *Cal. Ven.*, VI, pp. 401–2. Badoer had been told that she was 'beyond measure exasperated'.

36 B.L. Sloane MS 1786, which is the Latin version prepared for Philip. N O T E S T O PA G E S 2 0 3 – 2 1 8

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37 This was staged by an adventurer named Thomas Strafford, who pretended a remote claim to the throne. There is more than a suspicion that it was abetted by Lord Paget (who supported the war) with the aid of a French free-booter called Jean Ribaut. 38

Cal. Span., XI, p. 393.

39 Surian to the Doge and Senate, 15 January 1558,

Cal. Ven., VI, p. 1427. Philip to Pole, 21

January 1558,

Cal. Span., XIII, p. 340.

40 F.J. Fisher, 'Infl uenza and Infl ation in Tudor England',

Economic History Review, (1965), 2nd series, 18, pp. 12–30.

41 S. Adams and M. Rodriguez Salgado (eds), 'The Count of Feria's Despatch of 14th November 1558',

Camden Miscellany, (1984), 28 p. 328. 42 Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, III, pp. 536–50

Notes to Chapter 10: The Unmarried Sovereign: Elizabeth I 1 Judith Richards (1999), 'Love and a Female Monarch; the case of Elizabeth Tudor', *Journal of British Studies*, 28, pp. 133–60.

2 Glyn Redworth, 'Matters Impertinent to Women', in English Historical Review, (1997), 112, pp. 597–613. Judith Richards 'Mary Tudor as "Sole Queen"? Gendering Tudor Monarchy',

Historical Journal, (1997), 40, pp. 895–924.

3 The Queen's answer to the Commons petition, 1559. L.S. Marcus, J. Mueller and M.B. Rose,

Elizabeth I, Collected Works, (Chicago, 2000), p. 59. 4 Judith Richards (1997), '"To Promote a Woman to Bear Rule"; Talking of Queens in MidTudor England', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 28, pp. 101–22. 5 Draft proclamation of December 1563. *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, II, pp. 240–412. It is not clear whether it was ever issued.

6 Anonymous,

A Special Grace Appointed to Have been Said after a Banket in York (1558). 7 *Revised Short Title Catalogue* 23400. Elizabeth particularly resented being described as being 'led blindfolded as a poor lamb to the slaughter'.

8 Princess Elizabeth to Edward Seymour, Lord Protector, 28 January 1549. Marcus, et al.,

Collected Works, pp. 22–4.

9 William Camden (ed. 1625),

Annales, III, p. 12. *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish, 1580–86*, p. 227.

10 Richards, '"To Promote a Woman to Bear rule".'

11 TNA, SP12/7, nos 169–71.

12 J. Bain et al. (eds),

Calendar of State Papers Relating to Scotland, 1547–1603, (1898–1952), vols II and III.

13 J.H. Pollen (1922), 'Mary Queen of Scots and the Babington Plot',

Scottish Historical Society, 3rd series, 3.

14 Marcus, et al.,

Collected Works, pp. 325–6. 'Gathered by one that heard it.'

15 Ibid., n. 1.

16 W.P. Haugaard 'Elizabeth Tudor's Book of Devotions: A Neglected Clue to the Queen's Life and Character',

Sixteenth Century Journal, (1981), 12, pp. 79–105. 17 Indictment of Lord John Bray (1556). *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, III, p. 396. 248

18 Christopher Haigh, 'From Monopoly to Minority; Catholicism in Early Modern England',

Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, (1981), 5th series, 31, pp. 129–47. 19 Elizabeth's willingness to appoint bishops with much more radical views than her own was evident in the vestiarian controversy of 1566. Ibid., pp. 102–4. 20 Richard Mulcaster, *The Passage of Most Dread Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth, through the City of London …* (1558), in A.F. Pollard, *Tudor Tracts*, (1903), p. 387. 21 Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton, (London, 1984) Book 2, 2, xlii. 22 G. von Bulow, 'Journey through England and Scotland, Made by Lupold von Wedel in the Years 1584 and 1585', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, n.s. 9 (1895), pp. 258–9. 23 *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, pp. 303–4.

24 William Camden (1688),

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Medieval Chinese Warfare, 300–900

David A. Graff

London and New York

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Warfare and History

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David A. Graff

Medieval Chinese Warfare, 300–900

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David A. Graff is Assistant Professor of History at Kansas State University. He received his PhD in East Asian Studies from Princeton University in 1995.

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Preface and acknowledgments

This book was several years in the making and stands on the shoulders of several earlier projects, including my doctoral dissertation. The list of people and institutions whose contributions should be acknowledged is therefore a rather long one. I will mention only a few of those names here. The list begins with the members of my doctoral committee at Princeton University, Professors Denis Twitchett, Ying-shih Yü, and Martin Collcutt. It also includes Professor Huang Ch'ing-lien of the Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica, who provided valuable assistance and advice during a year of research in Taiwan (1992–3) that was supported by a research grant from the Center for Chinese Studies of the National Central Library in Taipei. Additional research for this volume was done during a year as a visiting scholar in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University, made possible by Professor Peter K. Bol. Jeremy Black and Peter Lorge read the manuscript and suggested numerous improvements, while timely intervention by Ken Chase saved me from an embarrassing *faux pas*. Mr. Yang Yu-wei not only helped to clarify some of the more obscure passages in the ancient military texts, but also guided me through a great deal of medieval parallel prose that would otherwise have been utterly impenetrable. Any errors that remain are, of course, entirely my own responsibility.

Though it may not be immediately apparent to the non-specialist reader, I have tried to keep the sinological baggage in this book to a minimum. All official titles are translated, as are most other Chinese terms. Specific dates have in all cases been converted to Western equivalents (for example, April 30, 637, rather than "the first day of the fourth month of the eleventh year of the Zhenguan era of Emperor Taizong of the Tang dynasty"). References to months are trickier, since the months of the Chinese lunar calendar rarely coincide with those of the Julian and Gregorian calendars. In order to avoid repeated use of awkward locutions such as "between the middle of April and the middle of May 758," I have generally chosen to refer to months of the Chinese calender (e.g., "in the third lunar month of 758"). The Chinese lunar months usually begin between eighteen and forty-five days later than their Western equivalents. Thus, the first day of the first lunar month of the sixth year of the Wude era corresponds to February 5, 623. The discrepancy between the Western and Chinese years does not present a serious problem for the purposes of this volume because there is little day-by-day narrative description of military campaigns.

David A. Graff
Manhattan, Kansas
May 2001

Map 1 Provinces of modern China

Map 2 Physical map of China

1
Introduction

The body of writing in Western languages on Chinese military history is not large. Very few students of Chinese history and culture have had much interest in things military, while military historians, for their part, have paid little attention to China. Most general surveys of military history follow in the footsteps of J. F. C. Fuller's fifty-year-old *Military History of the Western World* in that they are limited explicitly to a "Western world" (usually defined as Europe, the Near East, and European colonies of settlement).[1] Even those authors who have attempted to write a more global military history, such as John Keegan with his *History of Warfare* (1993), have tended to give China short shrift even as they perpetuate longstanding stereotypes of an Asian way of war.[2] To be fair, the writers of broad syntheses have inevitably been hemmed in by the lack of a substantial specialist literature in English and other Western languages. And this neglect surely owes something to the fact that from its origin in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, modern Western sinology grew accustomed to scrutinizing a China that was militarily weak and technologically backward, the hapless victim of Western and Japanese imperialists. Stated in the bluntest terms, China appeared to be a perennial loser with little to teach the winners when it came to the military arts.

Such attention as there has been has clustered in two areas. One is contemporary military analysis and the study of recent conflicts, a field that began to thrive after the emergence of Communist China as a significant military competitor in the Korean War of 1950–3. Recent trends in Chinese military expenditures and Sino–US relations suggest that this area of inquiry will continue to flourish in the foreseeable future. The second area of interest has been the study of the ancient military classics dating from the Warring States period (453–221 BC), especially Sunzi's *Art of War*. The thirteen chapters of Sunzi have been translated into many Western languages since the first French translation by Père Amiot was published in 1772.[3] English renditions began with the efforts of Captain Calthrop and Lionel Giles in the early years of the twentieth century, and there are at least half a dozen competing versions currently in print. The market would seem to be insatiable. This popularity owes something to the profundity of the text itself, something to the portability of its teachings to other times, places, and fields of activity, and something (perhaps) to the

much wider Western interest in the "wisdom books of the East." From the point of view of the serious student of Chinese military history, this emphasis is by no means misplaced: The "age of the classics" was a formative period for many ideas and institutions, and the influence of Sunzi on later military thought and practice is undeniable.

The emphasis on the early and recent periods has, however, left most of China's military history relatively unexplored. For nearly a generation, the conference volume *Chinese Ways in Warfare*, edited by John K. Fairbank and Frank A. Kierman, Jr. and published by Harvard University Press in 1974, remained the single most important work in English on military operations and practices in "Imperial China" – that is, the entire period from the unification of the empire in 221 BC to the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1912. Those wishing to dig deeper have had to seek out obscure monographs,[4] unpublished doctoral dissertations,[5] scattered articles,[6] individual chapters in books not otherwise devoted to military history,[7] and works in various foreign languages.[8] Within the broad chronological framework of imperial China, coverage of the period from the fall of the Han dynasty in AD 220 to the establishment of the Song dynasty in 960 has been especially sparse, perhaps because the political chaos and disunity that plagued the Chinese world for much of this period could not compete with strong, expansive dynasties for the attention of military historians.

The modern Chinese-language secondary literature is of course much more extensive, but it is of very uneven quality. The most substantial scholarly contributions have been made in the study of military institutions, a subfield of the much broader literature on Chinese institutional history that dates back at least to the *Tong dian* (*Comprehensive Canons*) compiled by the scholar-official Du You in the middle years of the Tang dynasty. Many detailed studies have been produced dealing with military organization, recruitment, and the terms of military service in particular periods of Chinese history; based on the careful study of surviving documents, historical records, and literary texts, these works can be intimidating to the non-specialist. A fine example of this genre is Gu Jiguang's book on the *fubing* or territorial soldiery of the Tang dynasty, originally published in 1962; another, more recent example is Sun Jimin's 1995 book on the expeditionary armies of the Tang dynasty.[9] Military institutions have also drawn a great deal of attention from Japanese sinologists; for the period covered by this book, extremely important contributions have been made by prominent scholars such as Hamaguchi Shigekuni, Kikuchi Hideo, and Tanigawa Michio.

The history of battles and campaigns, as opposed to the history of military institutions, has received relatively little scholarly attention.

To be sure, for the premodern period we now have massive multivolume "official" histories such as the ten-volume *Zhongguo lidai zhanzheng shi* (History of Chinese warfare through the ages), published in Taipei in 1967 under the auspices of the Armed Forces Joint Staff College, and the twenty-volume *Zhongguo junshi tongshi* (Comprehensive history of military affairs in China), issued in Beijing in 1998 by the Military Science Publishing House. These works and others like them leave much to be desired, however. Typically written by committees rather than individual authors, they often do little more than paraphrase the narratives of the traditional dynastic histories, with little attention to textual criticism, rigorous analysis, and unconventional lines of questioning. Military history as written by such innovative Western practitioners as Hans Delbrück and John Keegan has scarcely been attempted – in any language – for the more than two thousand years of imperial China.

The aim of the present volume is considerably less ambitious. It is intended not to revolutionize the writing of Chinese military history but to begin to close the vast gap that separates the Chinese and Western-language literature dealing with the interrelationship of warfare, state, and society during the six centuries between the fall of the Western Jin dynasty and the fall of the Tang dynasty. While other volumes in this series have been organized thematically, the unfamiliarity of even the most basic political history of this period for most Western readers necessitates a different approach. This study is built around a fairly straightforward narrative of political and military events, with chronology dictating the sequence of the chapters. Within this basic framework, developments in military institutions, social and political structures, and the techniques of warfare are introduced where appropriate. The goal is to elucidate some of the most important connections between warfare, military institutions, and social change in medieval China.

The term "medieval," when applied to Chinese history, requires some clarification, as does the word "China" itself when we are dealing with the period from AD 300 to 900. Following widespread (but far from universal) usage among historians of China, I have chosen to take the early years of the fourth century and the fall of the Western Jin dynasty as the beginning of China's medieval period. These years saw the final collapse of the unified imperial state initiated more than five centuries earlier by the First Emperor of Qin, and a rapid descent into chaos and disunity that would last for nearly two hundred years; the parallel with roughly contemporaneous developments in Europe and the Mediterranean world is obvious and will receive more detailed attention in the next chapter. The endpoint of the Chinese Middle Ages is much less obvious. For the purposes of this particular study –

and to hold this volume to a reasonable length – I have chosen to follow the lead of the pioneering Japanese sinologist Naito Torajiro and place the end of the medieval world at about the end of the Tang dynasty (618–907). The reader should be aware that other scholars (such as Herbert Franke) have sometimes attached the "medieval" label to the Song (960–1279) and Yuan (1279–1368) dynasties as well.

The meaning of "China" does not at first seem to be problematic. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the natural tendency is to think of China as the territory of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and the Chinese as the ethnic Han people who make up more than 90 percent of the population of today's PRC. Unfortunately, these assumptions do not mesh very well with the realities of the first millennium. For much of the period covered by this book, the territory of today's China was divided into two, several, or many rival political entities. The vast, peripheral regions of today's PRC, including Tibet, Xinjiang, Qinghai, and Yunnan provinces, and most of Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, were rarely (and in some cases never) subordinated to Han Chinese states or empires, though their inhabitants often posed serious military threats under their own native rulers. On the other hand, at least one area that is not part of today's China – northern Vietnam – was administered as an integral part of Western Jin, the southern dynasties, and the Sui and Tang empires. Another outlying area, the Korean peninsula, had been part of the Han empire; it continued to be included in the sphere of Chinese diplomatic and tributary relations, and faced repeated efforts by the Sui and Tang dynasties to establish direct military and administrative control. The "China" dealt with in this volume is, in other words, not a single imperial state, but a vast subcontinental region of Eastern Asia whose boundaries do not coincide precisely with those of today's PRC.

The population of this region was extremely diverse. An inner zone, "China proper," contained the largest and densest population; this zone included the North China Plain, the Wei River valley, most of the Yangzi valley, the Sichuan basin, and various river valleys south of the Yangzi. The majority of the people here were sedentary farmers who were Han Chinese by language, cultural traditions, and self-identification. Many mountainous regions were, however, inhabited by distinct peoples such as the Man and Liao with their own languages, customs, and ethnic identities. Still other peoples inhabited an outer, peripheral zone including the arid steppes of Mongolia and Dzungaria, the oases of the Tarim basin, the forests of Manchuria, and the alpine deserts of the Tibetan plateau. Most of these people were not agriculturalists but hunters or stockbreeders, and some – especially the steppe dwellers – were full nomads. While the outer

zone was generally inhospitable to settlement and exploitation by Han farmers, there was considerable movement in the other direction, especially during the first half of the period covered in this book. Large numbers of "barbarians" from the outer zone settled in North China, and they provided almost all of the rulers of the various northern states until 581. As time passed, these peoples tended to lose their separate ethnic and linguistic identity through intermarriage with the Han majority and the adoption of Han dress and customs. This process was by no means a one-way street, however. There are also examples of Han military families moving to the northern frontier and adopting the language and lifestyle of their "barbarian" comrades. The malleability of ethnic identity in medieval China will be a recurrent theme of this book.

The picture of medieval Chinese warfare presented in this volume is inevitably influenced by the nature of the available sources. There are very few truly "primary" sources bearing on this subject. These include a small number of original government documents (such as duty rosters) from the manuscript caches discovered at Dunhuang and Turfan in China's arid northwest, administrative compendia laying out the organization of the imperial government, several important military manuals dating from the Tang dynasty, and a number of edicts and memorials preserved in encyclopedias and anthologies (most of which were compiled during the Song period). For the most part, however, this book must rely primarily on the "standard" dynastic histories covering the period from 300 to 900, including the *History of the Jin Dynasty* (*Jin shu*), the *History of the Wei Dynasty* (*Wei shu*), the *History of the Sui Dynasty* (*Sui shu*), the *Old Tang History* (*Jiu Tang shu*), and the *New Tang History* (*Xin Tang shu*). Most of these works were written in the early years of the Tang dynasty, though based on earlier records and accounts. The *Old Tang History* was not compiled until the middle of the tenth century, while the *New Tang History* did not appear until the second half of the eleventh century, under the Northern Song dynasty. Another important work of history bearing on this period, Sima Guang's *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* (*Zizhi tongjian*), also dates from the late eleventh century. With the exception of the *Comprehensive Mirror*, which began as a private historical project and later received imperial sponsorship, all of these histories were produced under the auspices of the state by teams of scholar-officials, men pursuing careers in the government service who had been assigned to the History Office (*shi guan*) or one of a handful of other organs that were charged at one time or another with the compilation of official history. All of these works represent the end result of a very long process of editing, rewriting, and condensation, and none can properly be characterized as a primary

source.

Given that we are largely reliant on the official historians for our understanding of medieval Chinese warfare, it is appropriate to ask what their sources were, how they handled those source materials, and what biases and distortions they may have introduced into their narratives. When it came to describing military operations, the official historians of Tang times should in theory have been able to draw upon a very wide range of source materials including not only primary documents such as proclamations and manifestoes, letters, memorials to the throne, all manner of military records and communications, and imperial edicts conferring appointments, bestowing rewards, and extending amnesties, but also the texts inscribed on the memorial stelae erected at some of the battle sites of the past, the direct testimony of eyewitnesses and participants, court dances commemorating the most glorious victories of the dynastic founders, and even drawings of successful generals and their troops in battle array.[10] Some of this evidence, especially that of a documentary nature, *was* used by the historians, and a great many edicts, memorials, proclamations, and letters were incorporated in the histories in abridged form. When it came to the particulars of what had transpired in a given military engagement, the most important sources were probably the "announcements of victory" (*lubu*) sent to the court by generals in the field, and the "accounts of conduct" (*xingzhuang*), which were biographies of deceased senior officials (including generals) submitted to the government by their relatives and former subordinates.

The "announcement of victory" normally gave the time, date, and location of the battle, along with the estimated size of the enemy force, the names of the enemy leaders, the names of at least some of the subordinate commanders on the government side, the assignments they were given as part of the overall battle plan, and sometimes also the number of troops under their command. The accounts offer few details of the engagement itself, but are careful to record the number of casualties inflicted on the enemy. Judging from the few surviving specimens, the "announcement of victory" was a rather one-sided document. While the losses of the enemy were recorded in minute detail, it seems that government casualties were not mentioned unless they were so few as to border on the miraculous.[11] There must surely have been a system for reporting defeats to the court as well, but the fact that no documents of this type appear to have survived is indicative of the fundamental bias of the reporting system. At a time when successful generals could expect lavish rewards while those who failed faced severe punishments, there was naturally a strong tendency to accentuate the positive. Some generals, such as Yang Su during the

Sui period and Gao Xianzhi in the middle of the eighth century, made sure that their secretaries sent in reports that were more flattering than the facts warranted, while others were in the habit of falsifying reports, magnifying small victories into large ones, and passing off defeats as victories – even though the falsifiers could expect to be punished if they were caught.[12] This sort of behavior is supposed to have been especially rife under the Tang emperor Xuanzong (r. 712–56), who took a special interest in military success beyond the frontiers.[13]

The "accounts of conduct" of military commanders would also have been self-serving, insofar as they were usually written by relatives or former subordinates of the deceased rather than officials of the Office of Merit Assessment and were often very similar to the eulogistic funerary writings that served the family's ancestral cult. They were likely to present their subject in the most favorable light, emphasizing his successes and skipping over his failures, and they were sometimes adopted by overworked official historians as the basis for biographies with little checking or serious revision.[14]

In addition to perpetuating many of the lies, half-truths, and distortions that had been introduced into their sources by the generals and their friends and relatives, the official historians also brought their own peculiar set of preconceptions and prejudices to the description of warfare. Western sinologists who have written on Chinese military history have complained that traditional Chinese battle accounts offer very little information about the substance or details of what happened. Herbert Franke, for example, points out that even major military events are often described in the most laconic terms: "'The army of X was defeated near Y', 'the city of Z was taken (or successfully defended)' – such are the usual entries."[15] Not all battle accounts are as spare as this, but there is no denying that medieval Chinese materials tend to be less informative about weapons, tactics, and the details of combat than battle accounts from, say, Greece, Rome, or Byzantium. To some extent this was because Chinese society did not produce people like Caesar or Thucydides – people who were not only chroniclers of warfare but also active participants. In medieval China, there was a fundamental disjunction between the people whose job it was to exercise military command and those who were responsible for writing official reports and historical accounts of military operations.[16] Though not necessarily illiterate, the men who exercised military command in medieval China were normally of limited literary ability and interests, while the writing of official history was the preserve of a "scholarly elite within the civil service," men who moved back and forth between the historiographical and remonstrative offices at court and were seldom

assigned to leadership positions in the provinces, let alone to army commands.[17]

With little knowledge of or interest in the practical details of warfare – and with very few details provided by their sources in any case – these scholarly official historians were probably more comfortable borrowing elements of their own descriptions of military operations from models of the genre in earlier histories and recycling conventional literary expressions and allusions bearing on combat than trying to offer a precise and accurate reconstruction of the event. When they did choose to provide details, they usually preferred to focus on a clever stratagem or an unusual or colorful feature of the battle or campaign.

The scholarly elite from which the official historians were drawn was not only unfamiliar with the practical details of military affairs, but was often actively hostile to warfare and the military. Its members esteemed the civil and literary virtues (*wen*) over the martial virtues (*wu*), and regarded the resort to arms as "an undesirable option, almost a confession of failure."[18] They strove to limit or reduce the power and influence of military officials within the imperial polity, and sometimes argued against major military expeditions beyond the empire's borders.[19] The cultural preference for *wen* over *wu* dated back to the early days of Chinese civilization, and had long ago given rise to the time-honored literary convention that C. H. Wang has called "the ellipsis of battle". In Chinese poetry, "the battle, the actual clash of arms, is almost always left unsaid. … It is a significant feature in the Chinese literary convention that keeps poetry about the heroic action from developing into a detailed narrative of the battle."[20] It would seem that this same convention applied with equal force both to military reports and to the battle narratives crafted by the official historians. The "announcements of victory" emphasize initial dispositions and the listing of the spoils rather than the combat itself, while the battle accounts in the standard histories tend to focus on pre-battle deliberations and post-battle explanations of strategy.

The literati bias that informs the standard histories is not simply a matter of omission, but may also introduce significant distortions into the sources for medieval Chinese warfare. The histories often have generals quoting from the *Sunzi* and other ancient military classics to justify and explain their decisions. But can we trust this evidence? Highly literate scholar-officials were more likely to be familiar with this body of book-learning than the military men were. Quotes from the military classics are often encountered in the memorials and other documents drafted by scholar-officials.[21] And these men were already accustomed to quoting from the Confucian canon to support their own policy positions and attack their opponents.[22] When the historian

chose to exercise his imagination to produce a more detailed picture of military decisionmaking than was strictly warranted by the evidence at his disposal, there is good reason to believe that he was inclined to portray a mode of argumentation firmly grounded in *textual* authority. It is perhaps also worth noting that an emphasis on the mastery of book-learning as the key to success in war is very well suited to the purpose of putting military men in their place, implying as it does that military command at the highest levels can be successfully exercised by scholars with no skill at arms and no practical experience of warfare.

Another area where the standard histories may present a somewhat misleading picture of medieval Chinese warfare is with regard to magic and divination. The most important and extensive of the military manuals surviving from the Tang period, Li Quan's mid-eighth-century *Taibai yinjing*, devotes several chapters to methods of divination and prognostication, but this element is largely absent from the battles and campaigns described in the dynastic histories and the *Comprehensive Mirror*.[23] There are a few tantalizing indications that divination within the framework of established cosmological and cosmographic schemes may have had a significant role in shaping command decisions. We are told, for example, that when the Eastern Wei leader Gao Huan attacked the fortress of Yubi in 546 he selected both the times and locations of his attacks in this fashion, and that in 784 two warlords in Hebei divined to select an auspicious day to unite their forces in order to attack a common foe.[24] Such mentions are, however, extremely rare. It may be that these practices were unusual, but it is also possible that the official historians – who tended to adopt a rather rational, skeptical attitude – looked askance at magic and divination and preferred not to mention it. Magical practices mentioned in the standard histories of the Sui and Tang dynasties usually fall into one of three basic categories: (1) cynical performances put on by generals to raise the morale of their followers; (2) sincerely performed divinations or magic rituals that lead to complete and sometimes laughable failure; or (3) successes gained by men who scoff at superstitious beliefs. An example of the third category is a defeat inflicted on the rebellious province of Huaxi by the Tang general Li Su in 817, as recorded in Ouyang Xiu's *New Tang History*. Despite the objections of his subordinates, Li deliberately launched his attack on a taboo day and thereby succeeded in taking the enemy completely by surprise.[25] This case in particular suggests that cosmological and cosmographic beliefs may have had a widespread and hitherto largely unrecognized influence on military decisionmaking in medieval China.

Another aspect of the traditional Chinese historian's approach to military history that may be viewed with a certain amount of

skepticism is the treatment of numbers. Readers familiar with the military history of medieval Europe and Byzantium will very likely find many of the army sizes given in this volume incredible. Modern historians have consistently deflated the army strengths passed down by the medieval chroniclers, in some cases by digging out more reliable documentary evidence and in other cases by pointing to the inescapable limits of time and space.[26] It is now generally agreed that even in the expansive days of Justinian in the first half of the sixth century, Byzantine field armies did not exceed 25,000 and were usually much smaller.[27]

Modern historians of China have similarly questioned the army sizes (and most other numbers) found in traditional Chinese histories. In his essay on "Numbers and Units in Chinese Economic History," Lien-sheng Yang observed that it is "an open secret that generals over-report the number of their soldiers and exaggerate their military achievements," while the Japanese sinologist Miyazaki Ichisada found textual evidence that it was routine procedure for generals of the Three Kingdoms period (AD 220–63) to multiply the enemy's casualties by ten when reporting a victory.[28] The modern Chinese historian Li Tse-fen, a former military officer himself, has asserted that the early historians had a purely literary attitude, lacked common sense, and made no effort to report accurate numbers.[29]

This criticism is not entirely fair. The authors of Chinese dynastic histories and the preliminary historical compilations on which they were based were seldom men with practical military experience, to be sure, but they were also members of a functioning bureaucracy that kept voluminous records and made strenuous (if seldom fully successful) efforts to compile and maintain accurate figures on population, tax revenue, state expenditures, government grain supplies, military manpower, and the number of horses in the imperial herds, to name only a few areas of concern. Sima Guang, the greatest of the medieval Chinese historians, was anything but credulous about numbers and, when confronted with contradictions in his sources regarding the size of an army, almost invariably opted for the smaller figure.[30] Nor should all of the numbers given in the old Chinese histories be tarred with the same brush. There was not the same temptation to exaggerate the size of a government army that applied in the case of, say, the number of casualties inflicted on an enemy force. The great majority of the Chinese army sizes reported in Sima Guang's *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* and other traditional histories do not seem inherently implausible, given China's large population and administrative resources; most are fewer than 50,000 men.[31] The very large and very vague numbers ("several myriads," "a hundred myriads") are usually attached to armies of

rebels or foreigners (often nomads) where the Chinese historian had no reliable documentary sources to draw upon and was therefore able to give his imagination free rein.

Of course, even where the historian had official records and reports at his disposal, there was likely to be a strong upward bias in numbers. This was because it was very difficult to keep track of large numbers of people over time, even for armies as well provided with staff aides, clerks, and bookkeepers as those of medieval China. Soldiers were constantly being lost to wounds, disease, and desertion, while others were sent off in detached columns or left behind to garrison cities and guard supply lines. The size of an army changed from day to day, and if reinforcements were not coming in the change was necessarily in a downward direction. We cannot assume that all of these fluctuations were being accurately recorded and reported to headquarters, or that such records as did exist would have made their way into the hands of the official historians. Owing to these difficulties, it is likely that most recorded army strengths tell us the approximate size of the force that began the campaign, not the reduced force that arrived at the battlefield days, weeks, or months later.

How large were medieval Chinese armies? The best answer from the very limited evidence available to us is that they were usually smaller than the figures reported by the traditional historians, but in most cases probably not very much smaller. Reports of government field armies of 50,000 or less can be accepted almost without reservation, and armies in this range seem to have been by far the most common during the period in question. It is probably no accident that in his treatise on the art of war the early Tang general Li Jing used a force of 20,000 men as his example of a typical expeditionary army.[32] Although some of the larger figures are suspect for various reasons, armies of 100,000 or more are not inherently implausible given China's very considerable demographic, material, and administrative resources. (The empire's population was recorded at more than 57 million near the end of Western Han, at 46 million under the Sui dynasty, and at just under 49 million at the height of Tang power in 742.[33]) It should be borne in mind, however, that size always carried a price. Such massive armies would have been extremely cumbersome to move, supply, and control unless broken down into several smaller armies which would have been difficult to coordinate effectively from a single center. Only the very largest figures for campaign armies should be rejected out of hand: if the numbers reported for these forces are anywhere near accurate, they must represent not a single army marching together, camping together, and fighting together on a single battlefield, but the aggregate of several separate armies operating over a wide expanse of territory.

This volume consists of eleven chapters. The first chapter deals with Chinese history prior to AD 300 in order to identify the military inheritance from the Warring State period (453–221 BC) and the Qin and Han empires (221 BC– AD 220) that contributed to shaping the warfare of the medieval period. This legacy included not only weapons, tactics, and a body of prescriptive literature on the art of war, but also several key normative concepts. One was the ideal of a mass, conscript army, with all adult males of the farming population trained to arms and capable of serving the state as soldiers whenever necessary. A second was the ideal of imperial unity, with strict central control over all the armed forces of the realm. Another was the ideal of civilian supremacy, with subordination of the military command structure to the civil bureaucracy (headed by a ruler whose duties did not include military leadership in the field). Closely linked to this was the ideal of the scholar-general, capable of exercising military command on the basis of his mastery of texts rather than any practical miltary experience or skill at arms. These ideals and preferences underlay the military institutions of the Western Han dynasty (202 BC–AD 9), but they were the product of an age when wars were fought mainly between Chinese states. The rise of a strong nomadic power, the Xiongnu, on the steppe north of China at the beginning of the second century BC posed a new sort of military challenge and tended to undermine the arrangements that had emerged from the Warring States period.

The second chapter examines the collapse of the Western Jin dynasty (AD 265–317), which ushered in nearly three centuries of disunity. By the beginning of the fourth century, the need for permanent standing forces had resulted in the replacement of the farmer-conscripts of Han times by men of unfree status who resembled a hereditary military caste. Considerable military authority was delegated to princes of the imperial family, while the task of frontier defense was largely entrusted to barbarian groups that had settled within the borders of the empire. Reliance on such forces reflected the need for skilled warriors capable of standing up to the nomads, and also indicated the increasing importance of cavalry in East Asian warfare with the introduction of the stirrup and heavier armor for both horse and rider. These military arrangements contributed to the undoing of the Western Jin empire, which was ravaged by a civil war of the imperial princes and then faced with a rebellion of its barbarian auxiliaries. The capital, Luoyang, was sacked by the rebels in 311, and North China fell under the rule of a congeries of squabbling and unstable tribal statelets.

The third chapter examines war and society in North China from the fall of Western Jin to the reunification of the north by the Tuoba Wei

dynasty in the middle of the fifth century. Incessant armed conflict and the absence of a stable ruling authority capable of enforcing a monopoly of violence over a wide territory led to the fragmentation of Chinese society into self-sufficient local units, often dominated by local strongmen who built hilltop fortresses and organized their dependants into private militias for self-defense. Despite this pervasive militarization, ultimate political control remained in the hands of barbarian rulers whose authority derived from control of a core following of tribal cavalry. Even after the reunification of the north by the Wei dynasty of the Tuoba Xianbei people, North Asian cavalry remained the nucleus of the state's military power and society remained deeply divided between Han Chinese and those they regarded as barbarians.

A rump Jin government in the south survived the debacle of the early fourth century and lasted until 420. It was replaced by a succession of short-lived southern regimes, the Liu Song, Qi, Liang, and Chen. All save the last of these were established by families that had emigrated to the Yangzi valley to escape the chaos in the north. This chapter will examine the security problems common to all of the southern dynasties, including the need to defend against attack from the north, the desire to reconquer the lost territory, and the difficulty of controlling both powerful elite families and the court's own military commanders. The need to maintain strong military forces coupled with the inability to maintain effective control over those forces made for extreme political instability and helps to explain the rapid succession of regimes, most of which were established by military coups d'état.

The fifth chapter deals with developments in the north from the middle of the fifth century to the founding of the Sui dynasty in 581. The Wei rulers found it necessary to deploy strong forces to the northern border to guard against nomadic newcomers, and in the 520s their empire was thrown into chaos by a rebellion of the garrison forces, who were in part protesting the increasing sinicization of the Wei court and its lack of solicitude for the frontier warriors. In the wake of the Wei collapse, the north was divided between two rival successor states, Western Wei (later Northern Zhou) and Eastern Wei (later Northern Qi). In order to defend themselves against their more powerful opponent, the rulers of Western Wei–Northern Zhou found it necessary to supplement their small force of North Asian cavalry by drawing the militias of local Chinese magnates into their military establishment. This was the origin of the celebrated system of territorial soldiery (*fubing*), which eventually evolved into a highly cost-effective force of soldier-cultivators. These *fubing* formed the backbone of the armies that unified North China under the Zhou

banner in 577 and then conquered the south for Zhou's successor, the Sui dynasty, in 589. Not only did the new military institution play a role in the reunification of China, but it also tied the interests of local magnates to the imperial court and contributed to the formation of the mixed-blood aristocracy that dominated the Sui regime and the early Tang court.

The sixth chapter traces the conflict between the regional regimes in north and south China from the establishment of the Eastern Jin dynasty in the Yangzi valley in 317 to the conquest of its successor, the Chen dynasty, by Sui in 589. The north–south division was prolonged for a number of reasons. The north was usually divided between several states, but even when it was united the structural weaknesses of the northern regimes with their deep ethnic divisions often placed limits on what they could accomplish militarily. Northern invaders were also hindered by the south's climate and geography, especially the mighty Yangzi River barrier guarded by southern naval forces. The southern regimes, for their part, lacked the resources to reconquer the more populous north, and eventually they also lost the will to do so. The division was finally ended in 589, when the Sui dynasty controlled all of the north down to the Yangzi itself and was able to build powerful water forces to challenge Chen's control of the river barrier.

The seventh chapter focuses on the last Sui emperor's disastrous campaigns against the northern Korean kingdom of Koguryo in 612–14 and their consequences for China. If the Sui conquest of the south illustrates the constructive or integrative potential of war and military power, the circumstances surrounding the collapse of the Sui dynasty afford an example of war's destructive or disintegrative power. The Sui efforts met with failure due to the difficulty of overcoming Koguryo's strong border fortresses (compounded by the difficult geography and climate of southern Manchuria), and also because of the difficulty of supplying the unusually large armies that had been mobilized for these operations. The requisitions of manpower, foodstuffs, and other resources needed to support the gargantuan military effort, coming on top of natural disasters and routine corvée exactions, imposed an impossibly heavy burden on the peasantry of northeastern China and helped to fan the uprisings that brought down the Sui dynasty.

The eighth chapter is devoted to the civil wars that followed the Sui collapse and led to the consolidation of the Tang dynasty (618–907). With a number of regional warlords competing for power and an even larger number of local strongmen – some plebeian bandit leaders, others local elites, and still others former Sui officials – watching anxiously from the sidelines and hoping to end up in the winning

camp, Tang military victories played an important role in attracting supporters and pacifying large regions of the empire. The principal Tang field commander, Li Shimin, the second son of the dynastic founder, developed an extremely successful formula for dealing with his various opponents, one that involved occupying a fortified camp, avoiding a general engagement while raiding the enemy's supply lines, and only going over to the attack when it was clear that the enemy had begun to weaken. The new dynasty's last serious domestic opponents were disposed of in 622–3.

Once the Tang court had succeeded in firmly establishing its hegemony within China, the focus of its military concerns shifted to the northern frontier. Developments there from the 620s to the 670s are the subject of the ninth chapter. In a series of offensive campaigns which began in the late 620s and extended over several decades, the Tang won the submission of the Eastern Turks and other nomadic peoples. In many of these campaigns, cavalry forces provided by steppe peoples who had aleady been subjugated played a more important role than the *fubing* farmer-soldiers from the interior of the empire. In the northeast, Li Shimin, now emperor, began a new war against Koguryo in the 640s. After temporary success during the 660s, the Tang government was distracted by threats to other sectors of the frontier and its armies were driven from the Korean peninsula by the end of the 670s.

The tenth chapter traces the decline of the *fubing* system and the emergence of permanent frontier armies made up of longserving regular troops. The *fubing* were not especially well suited to long-range expeditions beyond the borders of China proper, and after the late 670s, when the Turks threw off Tang suzerainty, they proved even less well suited to the task of providing strong, permanent border garrisons. By the middle of the eighth century, powerful regional military commands had been set up along the northern and western frontiers. The military governors appointed to these commands led armies composed of full-time, long-service troops. By the middle of the 750s, most of the military governors and a great many of their soldiers were of barbarian origin. These forces proved extemely effective in guarding the empire's borders against the Tibetans and a variety of nomadic peoples, but this security came at a high price. Not only were the armies costly to maintain, but the imperial court relinquished effective control over the military governors, whose troops came to owe primary allegiance to their immediate superiors rather than the distant authorities in the capital. This situation made possible the devastating rebellion of the frontier general An Lushan, which raged from 755 to 763 and came close to bringing down the Tang dynasty.

The book's final chapter explores the impact of the rebellion on politics, society, and the economy during the second half of the Tang period. The failure of the imperial court to crush the last of the rebel generals completely, coupled with the autonomist tendencies of many nominally loyal commanders, meant that the imperial court lost control of a large part of the empire, territory which was divided among a number of unstable warlord regimes. The existence of these autonomous provincial military governments had significant social and economic consequences. They promoted greater social mobility by recruiting officials from a broader range of backgrounds than had been tapped by the imperial court, while the multiplicity of jurisdictions weakened the state's control of the economy and helped make possible the flourishing of commercial activity in the last century of Tang rule. These developments laid the groundwork for the very different social, economic, and political structures of the Song dynasty and "late imperial China."

Notes

1 J. F. C. Fuller, *A Military History of the Western World* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1954–6); an example of a more recent effort is Archer Jones, *The Art of War in the Western World* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

2 John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), pp. 214–21, 380–7, and passim. For a more sustained and systematic analysis of Keegan and others, see Jeremy Black's chapter in Hans van de Ven (ed.), *Warfare in Chinese History* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), especially, pp. 428–31.

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4 For example: Hans Bielenstein, *The Restoration of the Han Dynasty*, vol. 2: *The Civil War*, in *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* (Stockholm), 31 (1959), pp. 1–287.

5 For example: Terrence Douglas O'Byrne, "Civil–Military Relations During the Middle T'ang: The Career of Kuo Tzu-i" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1982).

6 For example: Benjamin E. Wallacker, "Studies in Medieval Chinese Siegecraft: The Siege of Yü-pi, A.D. 546," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 28.4 (August 1969), pp. 789–802.

7 For example: Ray Huang, *1587, A Year of No Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), ch. 6, on the Ming general Qi Jiguang.

8 For example: Herbert Franke, *Studien und Texte zur Kriegsgeschichte der südlichen Sungzeit* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987).

9 Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1962; rpt. Taipei: Hongwenguan chubanshe, 1985); Sun Jimin, *Tangdai xingjun zhidu yanjiu* (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1995).

10 For examples of imperial edicts dealing with warfare and the military, see Song Minqiu (comp.), *Tang da zhaoling ji* (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1959), chs. 59 and 60; for mention of stelae, see Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the T'ang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 13; for court dances, see Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian* (Beijing: Guji chubanshe, 1956), ch. 200, p. 6323; for drawings, see Liu Xu et al., *Jiu Tang shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), ch. 187A, p. 4867.

11 See Li Fang et al. (comps.), *Wenyuan yinghua* (Taipei: Huawen shuju, 1965), ch. 647, p. 17a, and other examples of *lubu* in the same chapter.

12 Denis Twitchett (ed.), *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 3: *Sui and T'ang China, 589–906, Pt. 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 68–9, Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 216, pp. 6888 and 6906–7; also ch. 217, pp. 6926–7.

13 Du You, *Tong dian* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), ch. 148, p. 3780.

14 For a discussion of the "account of conduct," see Denis Twitchett, *The Writing of Official*

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15 Herbert Franke, "Warfare in Medieval China: Some Research Problems," in *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan di er jie guoji hanxue huiyi lunwenji* (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1989), vol. 5, p. 806.

16 Li Tse-fen, *Sui Tang Wudai lishi lunwenji* (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1989), pp. 214, 218.

17 For the scholarly elite, see Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History Under the T'ang*, pp. 11, 15. According to D. L. McMullen, "many scholars prided themselves on avoiding involvement with military office"; see his article, "The Cult of Ch'i T'ai-kung and T'ang Attitudes to the Military," *T'ang Studies* 7 (1989), p. 62.

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19 McMullen, "The Cult of Ch'i T'ai-kung," pp. 70–1, 75; Michael C. Rogers, *The Chronicle of Fu Chien: A Case of Exemplar History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), p. 46.

20 C. H. Wang, "Towards Defining a Chinese Heroism," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 95.1 (1975), p. 29.

21 See, for example, Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 205, p. 6481, and ch. 232, p. 7465.

22 D. L. McMullen, *State and Scholars in T'ang China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 67, 71, and passim.

23 Li Quan, *Taibai yinjing*, in *Zhongguo bingshu jicheng*, vol. 2 (Beijing and Shenyang: Jiefangjun chubanshe and Liao-Shen shushe, 1988), chs. 8, 9, and 10.

24 Wallacker, "Studies in Medieval Chinese Siegecraft: The Siege of Yü-pi," pp. 794–6; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 142, p. 3875.

25 Ouyang Xiu, *Xin Tang shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), ch. 145, p. 4875.

26 For an example of the former approach, see J. H. Ramsay, "The Strength of English Armies in the Middle Ages," *English Historical Review*, 29 (1914), pp. 222–3. Ramsay found that surviving muster rolls listed 13,374 effectives (not counting contingents from York and Durham) available for the Scottish expedition of Richard II of England, while the chroniclers gave figures of 100,000 to 300,000. The foremost practitioner of the latter approach was surely Hans Delbrück; see his *Numbers in History* (London: University of London Press, 1913).

27 See John Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World, 565–1204* (London: UCL Press, 1999), pp. 99–101, and Warren Treadgold, *Byzantium and its Army, 284–1081* (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 59–64.

28 Lien-sheng Yang, "Numbers and Units in Chinese Economic History," in idem, *Studies in Chinese Institutional History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 80; Miyazaki Ichisada, "Tokushi satsuki," *Shirin*, 21.1 (1936), p. 134.

29 Li Tse-fen, *Sui Tang Wudai lishi lunwenji*, pp. 15, 28, 33.

30 For examples, see Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 206, p. 6515; ch. 217, pp. 6943–4; and ch. 258, pp. 8404–5.

31 See David A. Graff, "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1995), Table 2.2, pp. 49–53.

32 Du You, *Tong dian*, ch. 148, p. 3792.

33 For the Han figure, see Ch. 1, note 4; for Sui, see Wei Zheng et al., *Sui shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), ch. 29, p. 808; for 742, see *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 9, p. 216.

CHAPTER ONE
The legacy of antiquity

There has long existed a rough-and-ready, generally accepted periodization of the military history of the Western world. Though exact chronological boundaries remain subject to debate, changes in technology, tactics, and military institutions have enabled historians to distinguish between an ancient period dominated by the infantry-based armies of Greece and Rome and a medieval period characterized by political fragmentation, the primacy of cavalry on the battlefield, and the great advantage enjoyed by the defenders of castles and fortresses. This medieval pattern in turn gave way to an early modern warfare marked by the resurgence of effective infantry forces, the use of gunpowder weapons, and the centralization of military authority.[1]

In contrast to this familiar picture of historical change, the periodization of Chinese military history remains extremely murky. At the ancient and modern extremes, to be sure, certain changes are fairly obvious. The aristocratic chariot warfare of the seventh century BC was profoundly different from the conflicts waged by disciplined mass armies of infantry and cavalry four centuries later, and, at the other extreme, the struggle to assimilate Western military technology, organization, and ideas in the late nineteenth century marks another obvious watershed. In the more than two thousand years separating these points, however, significant developments are not easy to identify. It is not at all clear that medieval Chinese warfare – however we choose to define the term "medieval" in the Chinese context – differed very much from what came before or followed after. The starting point for this survey, AD 300, coincides very loosely with the appearance of the stirrup in China, while the endpoint of AD 900 falls just prior to the introduction of gunpowder into Chinese warfare. Yet, for a variety of reasons both institutional and technological, neither of these innovations seems to have had the same sweeping impact on the conduct of warfare in China as in the West.[2] Nor can this period be sharply distinguished on the basis of military institutions or organization, since there was little that did not have an analogue in earlier or later times. The choice of 300 and 900 as the chronological boundaries of this work has less to do with developments in the art of war than with changes in the broader background of Chinese society and the imperial polity.

At the beginning of the fourth century China was a unified empire ruled by the Jin dynasty (house of Sima) from the ancient capital city

of Luoyang just south of the Yellow River. The Jin regime was heir to the administrative and political traditions of China's first unified empire, which had been founded by Qin Shihuangdi of the short-lived Qin dynasty in 221 BC and continued in much the same form under the rulers of the Han dynasty from 202 BC to AD 220. Between the final collapse of Han rule and the advent of the Jin dynasty, China had experienced a half-century-long period of civil war and disunity when the land was divided between the so-called Three Kingdoms – Wei in the north, Wu in the southeast, and Shu in the Sichuan basin of the southwest. Each of these regional regimes claimed imperial legitimacy, but the Wei state, larger and more populous than its rivals, enjoyed a distinct advantage. In 263 Wei armies succeeded in conquering Shu. Two years later the last Wei emperor was deposed by the dominant minister of the Wei court, Sima Yan, who took the throne as the first emperor of the Jin dynasty. The Jin forces completed the conquest of the south by eliminating Wu in 280. The wars of the Three Kingdoms were the longest period of conflict and disorder since the founding of the empire in 221 BC, but their impact was limited by the fact that they were *civil* wars waged by Chinese against other Chinese with the aim of reconstructing the Han empire. There was actually a great deal of continuity in government during this period, especially in the north, and many of the officials who served the Jin court at the end of the third century came from families that had already been prominent under the Han dynasty.

The crisis that overtook the empire in the first decade of the fourth century was of a very different sort. A new round of internecine conflict initiated by feuding members of the Jin imperial house created an opening for revolts by non-Chinese peoples who had settled within the borders of the empire, and for invasions of North China by their pastoral cousins inhabiting the mountains, deserts, and grasslands beyond the frontier. The Jin rulers retreated south of the Yangzi River, leaving the north to be divided among a number of violent and unstable "barbarian" regimes. Some three centuries passed before the empire was reunited by the founders of the Sui and Tang dynasties, who had themselves emerged from the new, mixed-blood Sino-Turkic elite that had taken root in North China during the age of division. While the Tang dynasty was able to impose a high degree of unity and order on the empire for more than a century, the great rebellion of the frontier general An Lushan in 755 badly weakened the power of the court and ushered in a new period of warlordism and regional autonomy that lasted well beyond the fall of the dynasty in 907.

The period from 300 to 900 was a time when disunity and disorder were the dominant themes. China was subjected as never before to

invasions by peoples that the Chinese – or more precisely, their literate elites – chose to regard as barbarians. Much of China was conquered and ruled by the invaders, another unprecedented development. And during this period outside influences were felt strongly not only in the political sphere, but also in religion and culture. The chaos and violence of the age set streams of refugees in motion, especially from north to south, and gave rise – at some times and in some places – to autarkic, manorial systems of production. This period was also an aristocratic age, when hereditary status counted far more than had been the case in Han times. A distinguished pedigree could command popular respect and access to government office, and high birth was among the most important qualifications for leadership. China's "medieval" period was also an age of religious faith, as disorder and insecurity created fertile conditions for the spread of Buddhism with its otherworldly promises to people of all classes and conditions in all parts of the country. Buddhism was first introduced to China from India during the Han, but it was during the age of disunion and under the Sui and Tang dynasties that this foreign faith was fully accepted by the Chinese and enjoyed its greatest influence over thought and behavior, politics and the arts. As others have pointed out, parallels for many of the characterics of China's "medieval" period can be found in the Europe of the Middle Ages. The resemblance should not be pushed too far, however. Buddhist monasteries could be locally powerful, for example, but the Buddhist clergy was never able to claim the same monopolistic position that the Catholic church enjoyed in medieval Europe. Literacy, the written heritage of antiquity, and traditions of public administration were far better preserved in China than in the Latin West.

Just as the period after 300 was in many ways distinct from what came before, Chinese society of the Song dynasty (960–1279) and later was very different from the "medieval" world that preceded it. Sinologists have long regarded the transition from Tang to Song as one of the most important divides in all of Chinese history. It would be absurd to try to date this transition, based as it was on gradual processes of social and cultural change, to a single year such as 900, 907, or 960, but the changes that occurred in China between the middle of the eighth century and the end of the tenth were no less profound for being so difficult to locate precisely in time. These two and a half centuries saw the replacement of the old aristocracy with its hereditary claims to office by a more broadly based elite of landholders and bureaucrats recruited on the basis of merit rather than birth. The rise of the civil service examination system over the course of the Tang period certainly played a major part in this development, as did the rampant provincial warlordism of late Tang

which opened many local government positions to men of humble origins, the chaos of the late ninth-century rebellions and civil wars which destroyed many of the aristocratic families, and the emergence of a free market in land which enabled newly risen bureaucratic elites to secure their family fortunes as landed gentry. The same period saw the burgeoning of a market economy and increasing urbanization, the invention of woodblock printing leading to a much wider distribution of reading materials and correspondingly greater literacy, and a decline in the fortunes of Buddhism coupled with a revival of Confucian philosophy. One of the most influential Japanese sinologists of the twentieth century went so far as to label the Song dynasty as the beginning of "modern" China, primarily on account of the disappearance of aristocratic privilege and the enhanced power of the emperor, no longer first among equals, over all of his subjects.[3]

Of course, any scheme of periodization must inevitably do violence to a complex historical reality. Political and military turning points cannot be assumed to coincide with significant social and economic developments, and none of these are necessarily connected to new intellectual departures or innovations in technology. Some phenomena change quickly and others, the stuff of Braudel's *longue durée*, change slowly or not at all. The basic agrarian pattern of Chinese life and the family-oriented Confucian value system must be counted as part of this relatively static substrate, as must a number of ideas and practices that were already quite well established by the beginning of the medieval period. One of these was the ideal of imperial unity, the belief that China – the lands and peoples that had been ruled by the Qin and Han dynasties – should form a single political entity under a single legitimate ruler who would serve as ritual intermediary between the human world, nature, and the cosmos. Even before Qin's creation of an administratively unified empire, the relatively loose hegemony exercised by the earlier Zhou kings had planted the notion that a single paramount ruler for all the Chinese lands was both desirable and necessary. Under the Qin and Han regimes, this craving for unity attached itself to the structures and pretenses of the centralized, bureaucratic empire. Imperial unity acquired an aura of legitimacy that became a valuable ideological resource for would-be unifiers. After the fall of Han, each of the Three Kingdoms claimed sole legitimacy for itself and dreamed of reuniting the empire under its own mandate, though only Wei–Jin had the strength to realize this ambition.

Another core normative principle was the centrality of China and the superiority of its civilization. Peoples who existed outside of the community of Chinese culture (as defined by customs, rituals, written language, and self-identification) were regarded by the Chinese as

"barbarians." The pastoral peoples of the northern steppes were characterized as having the faces of humans but the hearts of wild beasts, creatures for whom armed robbery directed against China was the natural way of life, while the aboriginal peoples of the south were viewed as simple, primitive types who could be brought around to a Chinese way of life through the transforming influence of benevolent local officials.

The ideology and practice of government were also very firmly established during the centuries of Han rule. Alongside the well-publicized official endorsement of the Confucian emphasis on government by ritual and moral suasion, there was also a lasting inheritance from the Legalist statesmen of the Qin dynasty in the form of a penal code providing harsh punishments for lawbreakers and detailed regulations governing the conduct of government business. The administrative structure inherited from Qin and Han reached down to the local level, the county (*xian*) with a population of several thousand or several tens of thousands; it relied heavily on written records and documents, and sought to maintain a very high degree of control over the population. The state counted the population on a regular basis (the census of AD 2 recorded 57,671,400 individuals[4]) and kept detailed household registers recording family members and landholdings to facilitate the extraction of taxes, corvée labor, and military service from the populace. Though many individuals and families were surely able to slip through the cracks, the state's intention was uncompromising.[5]

Just as the underlying framework for medieval statecraft was established in the Han dynasty and earlier, so too were the basic tools and techniques of medieval Chinese warfare. The Warring States period (453–221 BC) in particular saw a number of new developments that would permanently alter the shape of Chinese warfare. These included the rise of large infantry armies, the introduction of cavalry, the adoption of new weapons such as the crossbow, and the development of new techniques of siegecraft. During this period there was a vast increase in the scale of armed conflict, reflecting the greatly enhanced power of the state to mobilize resources for war.

This picture differed greatly from the style of warfare that had been practiced during the Spring and Autumn period (722–481 BC), when North China was divided among a large number of competing city-states ruled by a warrior aristocracy. Although small forces of infantry were present on the battlefield, most of the fighting was done by chariot-borne noblemen. Wars were fought for prestige and honor more often than for territory, and combat was hedged about by ceremonial and ritual restrictions. Divination and sacrifices were performed before battle, and it was customary for the two sides to

agree on the time and place before the action began.[6] The *Zuo zhuan*, a narrative history dealing with this period but committed to writing several centuries later, contains many examples of restraint and what might be described as chivalrous behavior on the part of the combatants. Commanders often refused to take unfair advantage of their opponents. In a famous case from 638 BC, the Duke of Song refused to attack an enemy force in the midst of a river crossing but waited until it had completed its deployment on the opposite bank, and in 554 BC an invading army withdrew from the state of Qi when it learned of the death of the Qi ruler.[7] On the battlefield, warriors prized heroic feats and gallant gestures. Winning was by no means irrelevant, but the battle narratives of the *Zuo zhuan* often give the impression that the most important thing was to show off one's bravery and individual style.

However, the increasingly intense interstate conflicts of the late Spring and Autumn period precipitated significant changes in both the state and its approach to waging war. In a process that spread over several centuries, the stronger principalities gradually succeeded in annexing their weaker neighbors and transforming themselves into centralized territorial states, of which only seven remained standing by the middle of the third century BC. As Mark Lewis has pointed out, a key step in this process was the tightening of administrative control over the rural population which was now called upon to perform compulsory military service.[8] This, together with population growth and increases in agricultural output stemming from the introduction of iron tools, permitted states to raise much larger armies than had been the case in earlier days, and the chariot component of armies came to be dwarfed by the growing mass of foot soldiers. By the late Warring States period military obligations were nearly universal for males; the state of Qin, for example, is supposed to have mobilized all of its men over the age of fifteen for a campaign against Zhao in 260 BC.[9] The new mass armies fielded by the warring states were also equipped with new and deadlier tools. Iron weapons and iron armor first came into widespread use during this period, and crossbows were being employed in large numbers on the battlefield by the middle of the fourth century BC. Some two centuries later, the crossbow had become, in the opinion of one authority, "nothing less than the standard weapon of the Han armies."[10]

Another major development of the Warring States period was the introduction of cavalry forces. Horseback riding was probably first adopted by the pastoral peoples living to the north of the Chinese states sometime between 650 and 350 BC. Among the Chinese, however, it does not appear that horses were ridden before the fourth century BC. This lag can perhaps be explained by the fact that the

Chinese did not come into contact with the nomads of the steppe until their northward expansion had absorbed "alien communities of mixed shepherds and agriculturalists" that had long served as a sort of buffer.[11] Once the northernmost of the Chinese kingdoms had come face to face with the nomads, however, the advantages of mounted combat must have been obvious. In 307 BC King Wuling of Zhao ordered his troops to adopt the clothing of the barbarians (trousers and tight sleeves in place of flowing robes) and practice mounted archery.[12] In the middle of the third century BC a Zhao army campaigning against the northern nomads reportedly included 13,000 cavalry as well as 1300 chariots and 150,000 infantry.[13] Other states organized cavalry forces of similar size, all of which were used more for scouting and skirmishing than for shock action.[14]

Along with the rise of mass armies composed primarily of infantry and cavalry rather than chariots, the Warring States period also saw the development of new techniques of siegecraft. Ruling groups in North China were building massive ramparts of pounded earth around their cities as early as the first half of the second millennium BC. Archaeological excavations have shown that major cities of the pre-imperial period, such as Linzi, the capital of the state of Qi, might have had walls more than twenty meters thick.[15] During the Spring and Autumn period sieges of such well-fortified centers were unusual; it was more common for an attacking force to raid to the gates of the enemy's capital and set fire to the suburbs before withdrawing. The military attitude toward cities seems to have changed during the Warring States period, however, perhaps because such centers now contained more people and greater wealth and had thus become more attractive targets for attackers. Texts of the period tell of a tremendous range of sophisticated poliorcetic techniques, including the use of engines such as arcuballistae and lever-operated stone-throwing catapults (trebuchets), approaches by means of siege towers and covered vehicles, sapping to bring down the walls and tunnelling to pass beneath them, or even the diversion of a nearby river to inundate the city (as was done to the Wei capital of Daliang in 225 BC). There was to be very little change in the Chinese art of siege warfare from the Warring States until the introduction of gunpowder more than a thousand years later.[16]

The result of all of these developments in the art of war was that conflicts came to be waged with greater intensity and on a much larger scale than ever before. Large, centralized territorial states could mobilize more men and keep them in the field longer. Before the sixth century BC, armies of ten thousand men or less were the norm. Campaigns seldom lasted more than a few weeks, and battles were usually resolved in a single day's action. By the second half of the

third century BC, however, the major states were accustomed to fielding forces of several hundred thousand men; wars could drag on for years, and entrenched armies of crossbowmen might confront each other for months along a front extending for many miles. A major defeat could spell the destruction of the state. Under these circumstances, the conduct of warfare lost much of the ritual restraint and air of sportsmanship characteristic of the Spring and Autumn period. Armed conflict was now unequivocally a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Tricks and stratagems were much admired, and generalship became a ruthless and highly rational search for the advantage that would lead to victory.[17]

The increasing scale and complexity of warfare during this period gave rise to a new genre of military treatises which offered instruction in military leadership, tactics, and the conduct of operations. The best known and probably the earliest of the extant military treatises, the "Art of War" (*bingfa*) attributed to the legendary strategist Sunzi, is thought to date from the second half of the fifth century BC, and many other texts were written during the Warring States and into the Han period.[18] The contents of these works, ranging from general principles of statecraft to specific tactical deployments, are too rich to be summarized in a paragraph or two. Suffice it to say that most of them place considerable emphasis on intelligence, deceit, and the psychological element in war. The target of strategy is not so much the enemy army as the mind of the enemy commander, and the general is advised to manipulate the morale of his own men – whether by ostentatiously sharing their hardships and privations or by throwing them into desperate situations so as to stimulate them to fight for their lives. Above all, this literature emphasized careful, rational calculation as the basis for military decisionmaking. Rulers were urged to weigh the balance of forces before going to war, and field commanders were advised to look for signs of weakness in the enemy camp, wait for just the right opportunity, and join battle only when the conditions made victory a foregone conclusion. This aversion to risk-taking is especially evident in the thirteen chapters of Sunzi: "The one who excels at warfare first establishes himself in a position where he cannot be defeated while not losing [any opportunity] to defeat the enemy. For this reason, the victorious army first realizes the conditions for victory, and then seeks to engage in battle. The vanquished army fights first, and then seeks victory."[19]

While this passage seems to be compatible with a strategy of delay and the temporary avoidance of battle, other parts of the same book show a keen awareness of the economic cost of war and point to the desirability of bringing the fighting to a speedy conclusion. These points are not necessarily contradictory, but they do highlight the fact

that the classical military literature of the Warring States period often appears to offer conflicting advice, imposing upon the reader the intellectual burden of reconciling two or more passages, or determining which might be the more applicable to the particular situation at hand.

One theme that runs throughout the military classics is the notion that command of an army is a matter of brains rather than brawn; bravery and prowess at arms are dismissed as unimportant or even harmful qualities, while superior perception and intellectual acumen are extolled as the most important characteristics of the general. One of the strongest statements to this effect can be found in the *Weiliaozi*, a treatise probably dating from the late fourth or early third century BC, in the form of a parable about the famous general Wu Qi. Once, on the eve of battle, the general's subordinates offered him a sword, but Wu Qi refused to accept it on the grounds that banners and drums, the tools of command, were the only weapons a general required. "To command the troops and direct their blades, this is the role of the commander. To wield a single sword is not his role."[20] If the general was to be the brain of the army, the soldiers were to respond as the limbs. Here, too, there was no room for individual heroics; what were expected were obedience and perfect coordination. This point is underlined by another of the *Weiliaozi*'s parables regarding Wu Qi: Before the battle was joined, one of Wu's soldiers was unable to restrain his enthusiasm. He left his place in the ranks, charged the enemy line, and then trotted back to his own position with two heads as trophies. The general ordered that the man be put to death. When his officers protested that he was a fine warrior, Wu Qi replied, "He is indeed a fine warrior, but he disobeyed my orders."[21] As Mark Lewis has observed, these lessons ran directly counter to the heroic ethos of the Spring and Autumn period and served the agenda of the centralizing despots of the Warring States who sought to impose discipline and control on the fractious warrior aristocracy.[22] But that was not the end of their usefulness. The emphasis on discipline served not only the needs of rulers, but also those of generals who were faced with the task of making the huge new armies of infantry conscripts effective on the battlefield. "Gongs, drums, pennants, and flags are the means to unify the men's ears and eyes. When the men have been unified the courageous will not be able to advance alone, the fearful will not be able to retreat alone. This is the method for employing large numbers."[23] Armies had become too large to be led effectively from the front, or for the individual warrior to make much of a difference in battle.

One of the most significant differences between the new style of warfare and the chariot battles of the old nobility was that military

leadership now demanded a great deal of specialized knowledge and training. The early military treatises were one response to this need. Another was the appearance of a new class of military specialists who were appointed to command positions on the basis of ability, technical skills, and education rather than noble birth. By the third century BC, it was common to find such people leading the armies of the major contending states, and specialized knowledge of military command was in many cases passed from father to son as a sort of family business.[24] It is important to note, however, that military specialization was never carried to completion in imperial China; military men were never really able to set professional standards, control the admittance of new members to their ranks, or enforce a monopoly over the exercise of military command. Civil officials, especially those with responsibility for territorial administration, were often called upon to take the field with local forces to deal with "barbarian" incursions, banditry, and rebellion, and a man might move back and forth between civil and military positions over the course of his official career. During the Han dynasty in particular, it was not uncommon for male relatives of imperial consorts to be put in command of military expeditions despite a lack of obvious qualifications for the job.[25] The various military treatises facilitated this sort of amateur generalship, inasmuch as they held out the possibility that book-learning could be substituted for real military experience.

This result was not necessarily intended by the authors of the military treatises. Judging from the contents of most of these works, their authors were speaking for the emerging class of military specialists and attempting to claim the largest possible sphere of professional autonomy. Several texts argue that the general should not be subjected to interference from the ruler once he has been placed in command of the army and sent into the field. "There are commands from the ruler which are not accepted," declares the author of the *Sunzi*.[26] When the general is deciding whether to join battle with the enemy, he should resist the instructions of the ruler and follow his own judgment. According to some of the treatises, the ritual by which a general was invested with his command authority included the ruler's formal acknowledgment of the general's autonomy in decisionmaking. During the ceremony, the general was presented with a pair of axes symbolizing his authority to impose capital punishment on the men under his command (normally a prerogative of the sovereign).[27] The general's authority was probably never as unfettered as this prescriptive literature would have it, but there is ample evidence from Warring States and Han that it was still considerable. In 158 BC, for example, the Han general Zhou Yafu refused to allow the

emperor to enter his camp until he had presented the proper credentials.[28] The leeway given to the commander of an army on campaign surely had much to do with the difficulty and danger of trying to micromanage the conduct of operations from a distant capital in an age when detailed reports and instructions could travel no faster than a horse and rider. There was a real need for command autonomy in the field. On the other hand, Chinese rulers also took various measures to keep the power of the military within bounds – especially in time of peace when command autonomy could be more easily dispensed with. The Qin and Han dynasties employed a system of tiger tallies. Bronze tiger figurines were divided in half, with one half kept by a troop commander or local official and the other by the government in the capital; troops could only be called up or set in motion when the two halves were matched. The principle of the superiority of civil over military leadership was firmly established at the very beginning of the Chinese empire. The rulers of the Warring States and the emperors of Qin and Han were not war leaders. They seldom took the field in person, much less risked their lives in battle. Their place was in the capital, governing the realm through the civil administration and the powerful symbolic propaganda of imperial ritual. The founder of the Han dynasty, Liu Bang, took the throne by force, but was soon advised by the scholar Lu Jia that he could not expect to rule the empire effectively from horseback.[29] Liu chose to follow this advice, as did almost all of China's other dynastic founders.

That the authority of the military commander was temporary and provisional in nature was underscored by the assumption, prevalent among statesmen and political theorists by late Warring States, Qin, and Han times, that the soldiers who filled the ranks of the army and the peasants who tilled the land (and constituted the vast majority of the state's population) were essentially the same group of people. This assumption, a reflection of the earlier extension of compulsory military service to the rural population, can be found in many writings of both the Legalist and Confucian schools.[30] In this view, there is no permanently existing military sphere that remains separate from the wider civilian society. All adult males are potential soldiers and can be called to arms when the need arises, but when the crisis has passed they are to be returned to the primary occupation of agriculture. The military institutions of the Western Han, ultimately descended from those of the predynastic Qin state, appear to have matched these normative assumptions very closely. This was especially true in the early years of the dynasty, when the Han system of military service was remarkably similar to the "cadre-conscript" pattern favored by European powers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Under the Han system, all males became subject to military service

upon reaching the age of twenty-three.[31] They served for one year in their home areas, during which time they received military training and some men were assigned to specialist units (such as cavalry, water forces, and elite crossbow-men). After the completion of the first year of service, some of the conscripts might be sent to perform a year of guard duty in the capital or on the northern frontier. It does not seem that this additional service was required of all of the conscripts, since the number of men entering the system each year would have far exceeded the relatively small number of troops garrisoning the frontier and the capital.[32] After their one or two years of service, men returned to their home communities and their original occupations. They remained liable for call-up in the event of emergency until they reached the age of fifty-six and received some refresher training during that time, with great military reviews being held annually by the local governors. Large armies were assembled on an ad hoc basis by summoning "reservists" from the commanderies (provinces) and appointing a general to lead the army on campaign. When the campaign was finished the soldiers were sent home and the general's appointment came to an end. This sort of military service was not sharply distinguished from the corvée labor that Han subjects were required to perform for one month of each year. Both were considered to be forms of "labor service," and a man called to serve for a year on the frontier could pay to send a substitute in his place – an escape route that was also open to men who had been summoned for corvée.[33] Those who had been awarded high honorific ranks by the state were exempt from corvée and all forms of military service. One way to attain such rank was by purchase, which meant that members of wealthy families would have been able to escape from all military obligations.[34] Although military service was in practice somewhat less than universal, the important point is that the imperial Chinese state claimed a sort of eminent domain over the muscle power of its able-bodied male subjects. This claim would not be forgotten during the medieval period.

The administration of the Han system of military service required a tremendous amount of recordkeeping and paperwork, but in this respect the military was no different from most other areas of the imperial government. Local officials were required to report the number of households and individuals in their jurisdiction on an annual basis and to keep detailed household registers.[35] Records of this sort made it possible for the authorities to keep track of which individuals were eligible for corvée labor and military service at any given time. And a well-developed military bureaucracy kept voluminous records of many other sorts. The most astonishing evidence of Han administrative practice comes from Edsen-gol in

Inner Mongolia, where the dry climate preserved a large number of documents, written on strips of wood and bamboo and dated between 102 BC and AD 98, that had been left by the Han garrisons of this northern frontier region. The documents include an account book, a record of pay issued to officers, a list of clothing handed out to servicemen, and a register of cattle, "with details of age, height, colouring, and other distinctive features."[36] There are inventories of equipment, records of work assignments, and reports of military incidents. A great deal of attention was devoted to maintaining records of communications. Beacon stations kept logs of signals received and sent, and headquarters kept detailed registers of outgoing correspondence and documents in transit. One such register indicates the destination of each item of mail, the date it was sealed and the name of the sender, and also provides a summary of the contents. It would appear that there was no aspect of importance to the functioning of these garrisons that was not subjected to painstaking inventory control and recordkeeping.

This sort of administrative routine was part of Han's inheritance from the kingdoms of the Warring States period, but the presence of strong garrisons at remote frontier locations such as Edsen-gol suggests an important difference between the unified empire and its predynastic predecessors. Although states such as Qin and Zhao did take steps to protect their northern frontiers against nomadic incursions, Zhao was much more concerned with the threat from Qin than with that from the nomadic Xiongnu people. The primary concern of all of the warring states was to triumph (or at least survive) in the armed competition with their Chinese rivals, and all of the classical military treatises assume that one's opponent will be a fellow member of the Chinese cultural community. The position of the Chinese vis-à-vis the inhabitants of the steppes took a sharp turn for the worse in 209 BC, when the Xiongnu were brought together in a powerful confederacy under a new leader named Maodun. Within a decade, the reorganized nomads had surrounded a very large army led in person by the first Han emperor, Liu Bang, who was forced to agree to a humiliating peace. There is some disagreement as to the underlying causes of the sudden emergence of the Xiongnu as a major power. One school of thought holds that it was the unification of China in 221 BC that prompted the nomads to coalesce in order to strengthen their own bargaining position in relation to the Chinese empire. The Xiongnu sought grain, silk, and other products of China's sedentary economy, and used the threat of violence (raiding) to persuade the Chinese to make these things available to them. In order to effectively coordinate raids, threats, and negotiations in their dealings with a now-monolithic China, the Xiongnu themselves found it necessary to rally

around a political center of their own.[37] Another view holds that this reorganization was the nomads' response to the political crisis that overtook them in 215 BC when Qin armies evicted them from their pastures within the great bend of the Yellow River.[38] Whatever the cause of this development, there is no question that political unity transformed the Xiongnu into a much more formidable foe by enabling them to concentrate larger forces and exercise better strategic coordination. Since the Xiongnu were trained from childhood as mounted archers, they already enjoyed certain tactical advantages over Chinese armies that were composed largely of slow-moving infantry units and cavalrymen less expert than themselves.

The Chinese developed several strategies for dealing with the nomads. During the early years of the Han dynasty, when China was relatively weak and the memory of Liu Bang's humiliation at the hands of the Xiongnu still fresh, the emperors adopted an appeasement policy that came to be called "harmo-nious kinship" (*heqin*). In concrete terms this meant payments to the Xiongnu, the establishment of frontier markets where they could trade with the Chinese, and high-level marriage alliances, with women of the imperial family being sent to the steppe as brides for the Xiongnu rulers. Given the propensity of the nomads for small-scale raiding even when "harmonious kinship" arrangements were in effect, the Han also took to constructing defensive lines, observation posts, and signal stations along the northern frontier. The practice of wall-building dated back to the Warring States period, when the Chinese kingdoms had built defensive lines first against each other and then against the horseriders of the steppe. After the Qin forces cleared the Xiongnu from the bend of the Yellow River in 215 BC, they set about linking the existing defense systems into the earliest version of the "Great Wall." This early construction should not be confused with the massive brick and stone fortifications near Beijing, which date from the latter half of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).[39] Qin and Han frontier defenses were built of pounded earth or mud bricks, and were more in the form of a series of forts, lookout towers, and beacons connected by a fairly simple rampart rather than the massive curtain wall-cum-causeway of popular imagination. But they were still a major construction project. The Tsondol lines, built by Han forces in the Edsen-gol area, stretched for forty kilometers and included one major fortress and twenty-six lesser towers situated at 1300-meter intervals, each within easy view of the next.[40] Positions such as these were maintained for most of the Han period. It has been estimated that approximately ten thousand men were needed to staff the beacons and watchtowers, exclusive of logistical support personnel and mobile reserve forces controlled by the frontier commanderies.[41]

The Han established military agricultural colonies (*tuntian*) to support

these defenses and reduce the cost of transporting provisions from the interior of the empire, and as many as fifty or sixty thousand men may have been assigned to these farms at one time.[42]

During the reign of Emperor Wu, the Chinese shifted from defense to offense. In 129 BC Han forces launched the first of a long series of large-scale campaigns aimed at destroying or subjugating the Xiongnu. This fighting continued with very few respites until the end of Emperor Wu's reign in 87 BC. The Chinese won major victories in the first decade of the war, but the conflict eventually developed into a bloody stalemate. The major Han offensive campaigns were spearheaded by powerful columns of cavalry; though their numbers should not necessarily be accepted at face value, the Han histories routinely mention forces of tens of thousands of horsemen. The first major campaign in 129 BC, for example, involved four separate Han cavalry columns each reported to be ten thousand strong, while the campaign of 119 BC saw two cavalry columns of 50,000 men each. In 97 BC, a total of 70,000 cavalry and 140,000 infantry were sent against the Xiongnu.[43]

The decades-long struggle for mastery between the Han and Xiongnu empires produced significant changes in Chinese military organization. It was during this time that the chariot, which had continued to see some battlefield use during the early years of the Han dynasty, disappeared entirely from the annals of Chinese warfare. In this sort of fighting cavalry forces necessarily came to play the primary role, as they alone were capable of keeping up with the fast-moving Xiongnu horsemen.[44] This presented a challenge for the Han military system because the vast majority of the conscripts were only prepared to serve as infantry. Cavalrymen tended to be drawn from the northern frontier commanderies where the environment was suitable for horsebreeding and the people were most familiar with horses.[45] Such men would have been much more in demand than ordinary conscripts from the interior of the empire during the period of Emperor Wu's campaigns, and they must have been called for service repeatedly – so often that they became full-time, professional soldiers in fact if not in name. Although the basic system of universal conscription and military training was not significantly altered until the first century AD, there is considerable evidence that, in the course of the great campaigns against the Xiongnu, military responsibilities came to be borne by men who were not ordinary conscripts. The wooden strips found at Edsen-gol indicate that at least some of the servicemen stationed there had brought their families with them, and that officers might serve for several years. At least one scholar has suggested that the practice of hiring substitutes could have led to the appearance of professional substitutes who became more or less

permanent denizens of the frontier garrisons.[46] The reign of Emperor Wu also saw the use of reprieved convicts in the garrisons and the earliest employment of surrendered tribesmen as a component of Han expeditionary forces.[47] All of this would seem to suggest that the basic military institutions of the Han dynasty were not well suited for prolonged warfare against a powerful nomadic opponent. As one perspicacious statesman of the early Han put it, "If you have soldiers from distant places defend the border and change them annually, then they will not know the skills of the barbarians."[48] There was a real need for experienced, long-service troops with special skills and a good knowledge of frontier conditions.

The trend toward a more permanent soldiery continued after Emperor Wu's time, and became especially pronounced during the Eastern Han period (AD 25–220). There was even more use of convicts on the frontier, and submitted tribesmen came to make up the bulk of the empire's cavalry forces. In AD 31, the Eastern Han founder, Emperor Guangwu, issued an edict abolishing the system of universal military training and one year's service in the commanderies. This did not mean the end of a generalized military obligation; most able-bodied males remained eligible for military service and could be called to arms in the event of an emergency. However, the first-line defense of the empire in ordinary times was now placed on a much more professional basis. A standing army of approximately 40,000 men, drawn originally from the followers of Emperor Guangwu in the civil war that had brought him to power, was stationed at the capital and several other strategic points in North China. Members of this force were long-service recruits rather than short-term peasant conscripts.[49]

At first glance these might seem to be developments of a centralizing character, but the most important long-term military trend of the Eastern Han was the loss of central control over the armed forces. This happened for several reasons. One was the creation of a new and more powerful sort of regional governor (*cishi*) with administrative authority over a number of local commanderies. Another was the gradual abandonment of control measures that had been scrupulously observed in Western Han times, such as the use of tiger tallies and the practice of appointing generals on a temporary, ad hoc basis. The most important factor, however, was surely the pressing need to respond effectively to the wave of Daoist-inspired peasant rebellion that swept over much of North China after the middle of the second century AD. With the standing army now of very limited size, regional and commandery governors found it necessary to mobilize local conscripts to deal with the crisis, and to supplement them with mercenary recruits and even forces of private retainers. Driven by the exigencies of the situation, the imperial court allowed generals and

governors considerable leeway in matters of military administration and command. They remained in control of the same forces for very long periods of time, and came to command the personal loyalty of their armed followers.[50] In a word, they became warlords. Once the rebels had been disposed of the victorious generals turned to fighting one another, ushering in several decades of intense, multicornered civil war followed by the three-way partition of the Han empire that lasted well into the second half of the third century.

For the soldiers and statesmen of medieval China, the legacy of antiquity was complex and multifaceted. It included both the ideal of imperial unity and the more recent experience of disunity and civil war; both the military institutions developed during the Warring States period and the very different set of arrangements that had appeared in response to the new challenge posed by the steppe nomads. Venerated classical texts offered more than one model of military leadership, and the ideal of civilian supremacy was balanced by stark lessons in the political usefulness of military power. Antiquity provided the basic parameters of medieval military and administrative practice – cavalry, infantry, and iron weapons on the one hand; strict regulations and extensive written records on the other. But within the framework established by tools and techniques, the legacy of the past offered many alternatives and left room for very different choices. The military pressures of interstate competition had transformed Chinese warfare and society in the middle of the first millennium BC, and the demands of conflict with the steppe peoples had undermined much of the military system inherited from the Warring States. The rulers of medieval China faced military pressures every bit as great as those of earlier times; in some cases, the challenges were of such a nature as to be entirely without precedent in Chinese history. The chapters that follow will explore the choices that the Chinese made when confronted with the harsh demands of armed conflict during the six centuries from the fall of Western Jin to the passing of the Tang dynasty.

Notes

1 Once we begin to look at the details, of course, things are not so clear-cut. Bernard Bachrach and others, for example, have pointed out the importance of infantry in Carolingian warfare and downplayed the role of cavalry. See Bernard S. Bachrach, "Charlemagne's Cavalry: Myth and Reality," *Military Affairs*, 47.4 (December 1983), pp. 181–7.

2 For an overview emphasizing the essential military unity of the entire imperial period, see Edward L. Dreyer, "Military Continuities: The PLA and Imperial China," in William W. Whitson (ed.), *The Military and Political Power in China in the 1970's* (New York: Praeger, 1972), pp. 3–24.

3 This was Naito Torajiro (1866–1934); for an introduction to his periodization of Chinese history, see Hisayuki Miyakawa, "An Outline of the Naito Hypothesis and Its Effects on Japanese Studies of China," *Far Eastern Quarterly*, 14.4 (August 1955), pp. 533–52.

4 Hans Bielenstein, "The Census of China during the Period 2–742 AD," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, 19 (1947), p. 135.

5 For the origins of the household registration system, see Tu Cheng-sheng, "'Bian hu qi min' de chuxian ji qi lishi yiyi," *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica*, 54.3 (September 1982), pp. 77–111.

6 Mark Edward Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), pp. 37–8. This behavior is reminiscent of warfare between the *poleis* of classical Greece; see the articles by Josiah Ober and Michael H. Jameson in Victor Davis Hanson (ed.), *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 173–227.

7 Cho-yun Hsu, *Ancient China in Transition: An Analysis of Social Mobility, 722–222* BC (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1965), p. 54.

8 Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*, pp. 54–67.

9 Hsu, *Ancient China in Transition*, p. 67.

10 Joseph Needham and Robin D. S. Yates, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 5, pt. 6: *Military Technology: Missiles and Sieges* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 139–41. For iron weapons and armor, see Yang Hong, *Zhongguo gu bingqi luncong* (rpt. Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1983), pp. 14–15, 142. Yang's book has been translated into English under the title *Weapons in Ancient China* (New York and Beijing: Science Press, 1992).

11 Nicola Di Cosmo, "The Northern Frontier in Pre-Imperial China," in *The Cam-bridge History of Ancient China*, ed. by Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 890–2, 912.

12 *Chan-Kuo Ts'e*, trans. by J. I. Crump, Jr. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 296–307.

13 Sima Qian, *Shi ji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), ch. 81, p. 2450.

14 Lao Gan, "Zhanguo shidai de zhanzheng fangfa," in *Lao Gan xueshu lunwenji*, pt. 1, vol. 2

(Banqiao, Taiwan: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1976), p. 1172.

15 Yang Hong, *Zhongguo gu bingqi luncong*, pp. 140–1.

16 Needham and Yates, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 5, pt. 6, pp. 254–5.

17 For the changing nature of war and generalship during this period, see Frank A. Kierman, Jr., "Phases and Modes of Combat in Early China," in *Chinese Ways in Warfare*, ed. by Frank A. Kierman, Jr., and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 27–66.

18 For a survey of this literature, see Robin D. S. Yates, "New Light on Ancient Chinese Military Texts: Notes on their Nature and Evolution, and the Development of Military Specialization in Warring States China," *T'oung Pao*, 74 (1988), pp. 211–48. The most important of the extant military treatises have been translated in *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China*, trans. by Ralph D. Sawyer (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1993).

19 *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China*, p. 164.

20 Liu Chung-p'ing, *Weiliaozi jin zhu jin yi* (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1975), p. 109. My translation follows that of Mark Lewis (*Sanctioned Violence in Early China*, p. 114).

21 Liu Chung-p'ing, *Weiliaozi jin zhu jin yi*, p. 110.

22 Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*, pp. 103, 107.

23 Sunzi, translated in *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China*, p. 170.

24 Hsu, *Ancient China in Transition*, pp. 73–6.

25 See, for example, the *Shi ji* biographies of Wei Qing and Huo Qubing, translated by Burton Watson in Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian*, Han Dynasty, vol. 2 (Hong Kong: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 163 ff.; and Michael Loewe, "The Campaigns of Han Wu-ti," in Kierman and Fairbank, *Chinese Ways in Warfare*, p. 87.

26 *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China*, p. 171; also see p. 177.

27 Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*, pp. 125–6.

28 *Records of the Grand Historian*, Han Dynasty, vol. 1, pp. 375–6.

29 *Records of the Grand Historian*, Han Dynasty, vol. 1, pp. 226–7.

30 Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*, pp. 64–5.

31 This sketch of Western Han military institutions is a composite based on several sources, especially Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 114–16; Sun Yutang, "Xi Han de bingzhi," *Zhongguo shehui jingji shi jikan*, 5.1 (March 1937), pp. 2–13, 23–6; and Lao Gan, "Handai bingzhi ji Hanjian zhong de bingzhi," *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica*, 10 (1943), pp. 23–55. Due to the difficulty of interpreting the very limited evidence, there is much room for difference of opinion. For one dissenting view of the Han military, see Sun Yancheng, "Qin Han de yaoyi he bingyi," *Zhongguo shi yanjiu*, 1987, No. 3, pp. 77–85.

32 Zang Zhifei, "Qin Han 'zheng zu' bianxi," *Zhongguo shi yanjiu*, 1988, No. 1, p. 95; also see Lao Gan, "Handai bingzhi ji Hanjian zhong de bingzhi," pp. 35–6, and Michael Loewe, "The Campaigns of Han Wu-ti," in Kierman and Fairbank, *Chinese Ways in Warfare*, p. 93. Loewe estimates that the total number of conscripts manning the northern defenses, exclusive of service and support troops, may have been only 9750.

33 Sun Yutang, "Xi Han de bingzhi," pp. 2–7.

34 Sun Yutang, "Xi Han de bingzhi," pp. 12–13.

35 Michael Loewe, "The Heritage Left to the Empires," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, ed. by Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 1015.

36 See Michael Loewe, *Records of Han Administration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), especially vol. 1, pp. 19–23.

37 This view is offered by the anthropologist Thomas Barfield in *The Perilous Frontier* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

38 Di Cosmo, "The Northern Frontier in Pre-Imperial China," pp. 964–5.

39 See Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

40 Loewe, *Records of Han Administration*, vol. 1, pp. 83–4.

41 Loewe, "The Campaigns of Han Wu-ti," p. 93.

42 Loewe, "The Campaigns of Han Wu-ti," p. 74.

43 These events are summarized in Loewe, "The Campaigns of Han Wu-ti," pp. 111–18.

44 For the importance of cavalry in Emperor Wu's campaigns, see Chang Chun-shu, "Military Aspects of Han Wu-ti's Northern and Northwestern Campaigns," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 26 (1966), pp. 149, 167–9.

45 Sun Yutang, "Xi Han de bingzhi," p. 23.

46 Loewe, *Records of Han Administration*, vol. 1, p. 82.

47 Sun Yutang, "Xi Han de bingzhi," pp. 33–4.

48 Chao Cuo, quoted in Ban Gu, *Han shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), ch. 49, pp. 2281–6. Also see Sun Yutang, "Xi Han de bingzhi," pp. 30–1, 46.

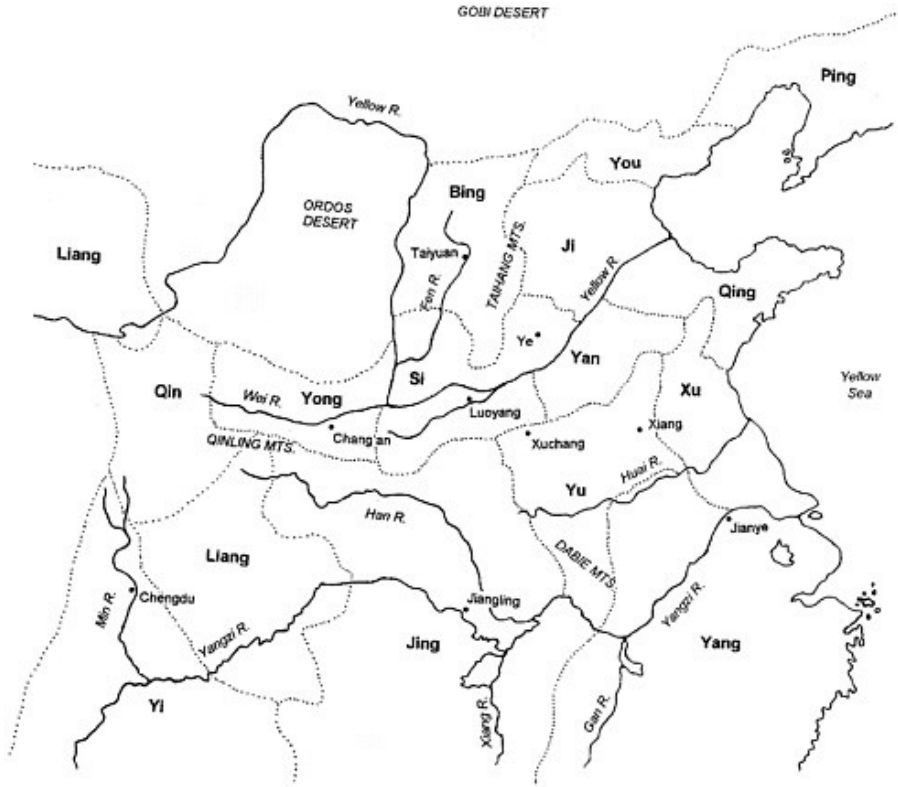
49 For the Eastern Han military, see Lao Gan, "Handai bingzhi ji Hanjian zhong de bingzhi," pp. 48–52; Sun Yutang, "Dong Han bingzhi de yanbian," *Zhongguo shehui jingji shi jikan*, 6.1 (June 1939), pp. 1–34; and *Zhongguo junshi shi*, vol. 3: *Bingzhi* (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1987), pp. 109–19.

50 *Zhongguo junshi shi*, vol. 3, pp. 116–17.

CHAPTER TWO
The fall of Western Jin

In the year 280, shortly before a general named Diocletian established his authority over distant Rome, Sima Yan's newly founded Jin dynasty in China attained the apogee of its power. The conquest of the southern state of Wu restored the imperial unity that had fractured with the collapse of the Eastern Han government at the end of the second century. Sima Yan's grandfather Sima Yi, the scion of a prominent and wealthy landowning family in the flatland region of Henan on the south side of the Yellow River, had risen in the service of the Wei state in North China and, under a succession of weak emperors, emerged as the dominant figure in the northern government. By the time of his death in 251 he was ruler in all but name. His authority was inherited by his sons Sima Shi and Sima Zhao, and then by Zhao's son Sima Yan. In 265 this new leader of the house of Sima deposed the last, feeble Wei emperor and took the throne for himself and his family; his reign lasted until 289, and he would be known posthumously by the title of "Emperor Wu of Jin." The southwestern state of Shu having already fallen to the northern armies in 263, Sima Yan turned to the conquest of Wu. The final campaign began in the eleventh lunar month of 279 with 200,000 Jin troops marching against Wu in six columns, one of which descended the Yangzi River from the former Shu territories in Sichuan.[1] The outnumbered southern defenders were overwhelmed in short order, and Sima Yan was soon in possession of almost all of the territories that had once been ruled by the mighty Han dynasty – from Lelang commandery in northern Korea to Dunhuang on the Silk Road, and south as far as the city that is now known as Hanoi.

Whatever Emperor Wu may have wished, however, the newly reunified empire was very far from being a faithful reconstruction of the glorious Han. Much had changed since the collapse of central power in the 180s, and the civil wars in the north followed by the incessant battling of the Three Kingdoms had not been conducive to the maintenance of the status quo in Chinese society. Perhaps the most significant difference between Han and Jin was a radical decline in the population registered by the state. The Jin census of 280 recorded 2,459,840 households and 16,163,863 individuals. This was an improvement over the lowest figures from the Three Kingdoms period, but it



Map 3 China under the Western Jin dynasty, *ca.* AD 300, showing provinces

was still only a fraction of the 10,677,960 households and 56,486,856 individuals reported by the Han census of 157.[2] Where had all the people gone? Part of the difference can be attributed to deaths on the battlefield and from other war-related violence, and part to the famines and epidemics that were so often associated with the movement of armies. Another factor was the migration of population out of the war-ravaged commanderies of the north and northwest, a trend that was already underway by the middle of the Eastern Han period due to steppe nomad raids and the rebellions of other frontier peoples such as the proto-Tibetan Qiang.[3] The best explanation for most of the loss, however, is that in the military and political confusion of the time the state was simply unable to maintain administrative control over the majority of the population.[4] Large numbers of peasant smallholders absconded to escape the heavy burden of taxes and corvée labor, increasing the burden on their neighbors and giving them all the more reason to flee in their turn. Many of the fugitives sought refuge with powerful landholding families that were able to shelter them from the demands of the state;

they became tenant farmers or agricultural dependants tied to the land like the serfs of medieval Europe. Adherence to such powerful families was doubly attractive because they were often able to organize their dependants to provide an effective community defense in unsettled times.[5] These developments meant that the imperial state was seriously weakened as a very large portion of its manpower and tax base was transferred to the control of the great landowning families. The Jin government did make a nominal effort to impose upper limits on the private control of land and population, but the Sima family and its wealthy supporters benefited too much from the existing situation for any reform to be pressed vigorously.

The political chaos of the Han collapse and the Three Kingdoms period influenced the health of the economy as well as that of the state. The treatise on "food and money" in the seventh-century *History of the Jin Dynasty* tells us that China enjoyed peace and prosperity for a generation after the conquest of Wu in 280: "Supplies flowed into granaries and treasuries. Palaces had additional adornments; dresses and playthings sparkled brightly. [The richest people] vied with one another in display. Their carriages, dresses, and food utensils were comparable in elegance to those of the imperial family."[6] This period probably did represent an improvement over what came before (and no doubt looked like a golden age compared to what came after), but for the great majority of the Chinese people it was still a very far cry from the vigorous economy of Han times, which had seen extensive interregional trade and the widespread circulation of metallic currency. Amidst the violence and uncertainty of the late Han civil wars, much cultivated land was abandoned, trade dried up, and copper coins disappeared from circulation. There was a return to barter and a "natural economy"; most of the government's exactions came to be collected in kind as quantities of grain and silk replaced currency as the medium of exchange and store and measure of value. In some areas, the wealthy landowning families with their numerous dependants and tenants had begun to create self-contained manorial economies.[7] It is worth noting, however, that in the Chinese context economic autarky was not associated with any formal division of sovereign powers between central and local leaders. "During the period of division following the Han dynasty China did not move from an imperial system to a feudal one. Government retained its imperial structure."[8]

The internecine conflicts that dominated the Chinese scene during the century after 180 transformed the economy and gave rise to new relationships between elite families and the farming population; they greatly weakened, but did not destroy, the centralized structure of imperial government. At the same time, they also saw the emergence

of new forms of military service and military organization. The most important of these changes were the creation of a dependent, hereditary military caste that was clearly distinguished from the general population, an increasing reliance on cavalry forces of non-Chinese, "barbarian" origin, and the development of command structures that left tremendous authority in the hands of local and regional military leaders. All of these developments amounted to the negation of the early Western Han military system that had been based on universal service and temporary, ad hoc command arrangements.

These changes did not occur overnight; as has already been noted, the Han period saw a gradual movement in the direction of long-service, "professional" military forces. The trend culminated during the confused, multi-cornered civil wars at the end of the second century and finally crystallized in the form of new military institutions during the period of the Three Kingdoms. The armies that fought the civil wars were raised largely from voluntary recruits, though there was also some use of press-ganging as well as forcible enlistment of prisoners from defeated armies.[9] Men who turned to military service for their livelihood remained under arms for very long periods of time or even indefinitely. The conditions of prolonged warfare favored the emergence of a soldiery expert in the use of arms and willing to follow their commanders from one region to another over the course of many years as dictated by the fortunes of war, while the stable administrative structures that had made possible the early Han system of military conscription simply ceased to exist. The unsettled conditions of the time also guaranteed that there would be no shortage of willing recruits, who could be drawn from the very large numbers of destitute peasants, fugitives, and refugees.

Many of the larger armies of the period were formed by absorbing lesser leaders and their followings. These leaders included both local magnates who had converted their agricultural dependants into soldiers and military commanders who had recruited their own private retainer corps of armed men serving in the capacity of personal dependants rather than government soldiers. The private fighting men in both of these categories came to be known as *buqu*, an old Han term for regular units of military organization that may be translated simply as "troops."[10] The relationship between commander and *buqu* was in essence hereditary. When the commander died, a son, brother, or nephew would inherit control of his troops, and when a soldier died one of his close male relatives would inherit his position in the ranks.[11] This pattern developed because the *buqu* were not so much individual fighters who had become dependent on individual commanders as they were the heads of families that had become

dependent on other families wealthier and more powerful than themselves. The connection was most obvious in the case of armed tenants or agricultural servants for whom survival on the land required acceptance of the same servile, dependent status from generation to generation.

The government armies of the Wei and Jin dynasties adopted a pattern of military service that was to a very large extent modeled after that of the private *buqu* forces.[12] This owed something to the fact that so many *buqu* had been absorbed into the ranks of the government army, and something to the desire to maintain a stable, reliable reservoir of manpower from which losses might be made good. The families of military men were concentrated in the capital and several other major centers, where they might serve as convenient hostages while the soldiers were on campaign. The soldiers and their families were assigned a status as "military households" that was separate and distinct from that of peasants and other commoners. Their names were recorded in special military registers, and they were subject to control by the military authorities rather than the local civilian administration. Once a man became a soldier, he served for life. When he perished or became too old or infirm to carry on, it was expected that a son or another close relative would come forward to replace him. Under the Wei dynasty soldiers and their relatives were only permitted to marry into other families with military status, to ensure that out-marriage would not lead over time to a diminution of the manpower pool. Ordinary commoners – that is, most members of the community – had no regular military service obligation, though in rare cases of urgent need men might still be conscripted for temporary duty. For the most part, however, there was a very clear distinction between soldiers and potential soldiers on the one hand and the general population on the other. The Jin dynasty relaxed some of the harshest restrictions that had been imposed by the Wei rulers, but kept the basic system intact and derived most of its soldiers from this source.

In broad outline, the measures employed by the Jin rulers to meet their manpower needs resemble certain policies adopted by the late Roman emperors to cope with their own shortages of military personnel. During the fourth century, in accordance with laws most likely introduced by Diocletian, Rome attempted to enforce its own version of hereditary military service by requiring the able-bodied sons of soldiers to enlist in the army.[13] After the late fourth century Roman generals and magnates had *buqu* of their own in their private corps of armed retainers, the *bucellarii*. The late empire also recruited troops of foreign or "barbarian" origin, including large numbers of Goths, Franks, and other Germanic peoples. Some were incorporated

in regular military units under Roman or Romanized officers while others, especially after AD 382, were settled within the borders of the empire as allied armies under their own chiefs.[14] In this respect, too, the late Roman armies resembled those of Jin dynasty China.

In Wei and Jin times, the non-Chinese peoples who lived not only along and beyond the northern frontier but also in settlements in the interior provinces of North China were an important source of military manpower. The employment of barbarian auxiliaries had begun during the reign of the Han Emperor Wu, when the campaigns against the Xiongnu put a premium on the services of tough, experienced cavalry forces. With the passage of time, the Han empire and its successor states came to place ever greater reliance on ever larger numbers of foreign horsemen. This trend received a major boost in the middle of the first century AD, when a succession struggle among the Xiongnu brought one of the rival claimants and a significant portion of his people to the border to seek Chinese protection. These "Southern Xiongnu" were permitted to make their home within the territory of the Han frontier commanderies, especially in the Ordos region within the great northward loop of the Yellow River and in the northern part of what is now Shanxi province, and they joined Chinese forces in expeditions against their northern cousins. In AD 90 Chinese officials counted 237,300 individuals among the dependent Southern Xiongnu, of whom 50,170 were males capable of military service.[15] Another nomadic people who submitted to Han authority in the first century were the Wuhuan of southwestern Manchuria. Possibly numbering as many as a hundred thousand, they were permitted to settle along the northeastern frontier in the vicinity of today's Beijing, as well as farther west in some of the same commanderies that were also home to the Southern Xiongnu.[16] On the northwestern frontier, surrendered groups of Qiang, a people related to today's Tibetans who supported themselves with a mixed economy of agriculture and stockraising, were moved into the upper reaches of the Wei River valley west of the old capital of Chang'an. Although not always fighting as cavalry, they too were often called upon to perform military service for the Chinese state. Bands of foreign warriors might also be recruited from beyond the borders of the empire. Especially noteworthy in this regard were the nomadic Xianbei people who had once lived to the northeast of the Wuhuan on the slopes of the Greater Xingan range. When the Northern Xiongnu confederacy collapsed near the end of the first century, the Xianbei absorbed many of its people and spread into the territory north of the Gobi Desert to become the dominant power of the steppe for much of the second century. Whether as subjects or as allies, all of these peoples contributed troops to the Eastern Han expeditionary armies. The four columns sent against the Northern

Xiongnu in AD 73 included cavalry from the Qiang, Wuhuan, Xianbei, and Southern Xiongnu, and the army of 50,000 men that the Han general Dou Xian led against the same opponent in 89 counted only 8000 Han Chinese soldiers.[17] Some barbarian warriors were also recruited into the regular armies of Eastern Han. One of the five standing regiments of professional soldiers stationed at the capital was made up largely of cavalrymen recruited from among the Wuhuan.[18]

The use of steppe cavalrymen in Chinese armies continued in the Three Kingdoms period and under the Jin dynasty. After defeating the Wuhuan people in 207, Cao Cao, the founder of the Wei state, moved many of them into the interior of China and incorporated the warriors into his army. During the course of Cao's struggles with other regional warlords, his Wuhuan gained a reputation as the best cavalry force in all of China.[19] But they were by no means the only foreigners in the Wei armies. Cao also commanded the services of a considerable number of Xiongnu, and claimed that his army included contingents of Dingling, Di, Qiang, and several other northern peoples.[20] Faced with the need to fill the ranks of their armies with high-quality troops and to replenish the declining population of the northern provinces, Chinese leaders continued to accept the submission of steppe peoples along the frontier. The Jin government, for example, received the surrender of 29,300 Xiongnu in 284, more than a hundred thousand in 286, and another 11,500 in 287.[21] Many of the barbarians who came under the authority of the Wei and Jin governments, both those who had recently submitted and those who had been under Chinese tutelage along the frontiers for several generations, were relocated to the interior of the empire. This was done both to "solidify" the frontier by moving potential troublemakers away from sensitive areas, and in the hope that the newcomers might eventually be assimilated to the way of life of the Han Chinese majority. The result, however, was not exactly what had been intended. In many areas of North China the barbarians came to outnumber the Han inhabitants, spreading a pervasive sense of insecurity from the frontier to the interior. The Xiongnu were present in very large numbers in the southern part of Bing province (today's Shanxi), and one anxious Chinese scholar claimed that the Qiang and other alien groups made up half the population of Guanzhong, the land "within the passes" surrounding the city of Chang'an.[22]

The military value of the cavalry forces raised from these peoples and their cousins on the steppe was being enhanced during this same period by several innovations in the tools of East Asian warfare. The mounted fighters of the Western Han period, both Chinese and Xiongnu, were overwhelmingly light cavalrymen whose primary reliance in combat was on the bow and arrow.[23] By the years around

AD 300, however, the appearance of heavy armor for both man and horse, the introduction of the stirrup, and the adoption of new patterns of edged weapons greatly added to the advantages that cavalry enjoyed over infantry. To the mobility and firepower of the old type of cavalry there was now added a much greater capability for "shock" combat that would be especially useful in the context of Chinese civil wars, where fighting occurred in constricted spaces and concentrated hitting power might be more valuable than the speed of movement essential to successful warfare on the open steppe. Due to the very limited literary and archaeological evidence it is not possible to determine precisely when each of these innovations appeared on the Chinese scene, nor what influence each of them had on the development of the others, but we can be fairly confident that all elements of the complex were present by the middle of the fourth century at the very latest.

At the time of the founding of the Han dynasty, the form of sword used by Chinese armies was the *jian*, a straight, slender, double-edged blade tapering to a point. It could be used for either slashing or thrusting. Gradually, during the four centuries between 200 BC and AD 200, the *jian* was supplanted in military use by the *dao*. Sometimes translated as "knife," this weapon was really a sturdy, single-edged saber with only very slight curvature. As a chopping weapon that could be used by horsemen against either footsoldiers or other cavalry, it was superior to the relatively fragile *jian* with its redundant edge. By the end of the Eastern Han period, the *dao* had effectively replaced the *jian* as the basic sidearm for cavalrymen.[24] Over the same span of years, the *ji*, a long-handled weapon with several blades that was used as much for hooking as for thrusting, yielded to spears and lances of simpler construction. This switch may have been the result of the adoption of tighter infantry formations, with less room for swinging and hooking, in response to the greater threat posed by cavalry. During this time the cavalryman was gaining a more secure seat atop his horse. The "rudimentary saddle" seen on the terracotta cavalry mounts from the tomb of the first emperor Qin Shihuangdi (really no more than a small pad, probably made of leather) had also become a thing of the past. "By the end of the Han period (ca. AD 200) we see evidence of a military saddle carefully shaped so as to fit the hips and upper leg, probably to assist the spear-bearing warrior to maintain his seat while using his weapon."[25]

At least some Qin and early Han cavalrymen were provided with simple armor to cover the front and back of the torso; this appears to have been lamellar armor, made from many small squares (lamellae) of iron or leather tied together with cords. About the beginning of the third century AD we find the first mention of horse armor (*makai*) in

literary sources. The great warlord Cao Cao boasted that with only ten sets of horse armor he had faced an opponent with three hundred. The very small numbers here are worthy of note, and it is not at all clear whether Cao is speaking of simple chest protectors or complete bardings. By the early years of the fourth century the numbers have increased enormously, with the sources mentioning the capture of thousands of "armored horses" in a single battle. A pictoral representation dated to 357 shows us a fully armored warrior: "The body of the rider is almost completely covered by armor. He wears a plumed helmet that protects the sides and back of the head, a habergeon with high neck and shoulder guards, and chaps. The armor was made of lamellar plate, but one cannnot say whether of iron or of lacquered leather. The bardings almost completely cover the horse and include a chanfron of distinctive shape."[26]

The rapid spread of cavalry armor and heavy cavalry in China and adjacent regions appears to be closely connected with the introduction of the stirrup. The very earliest Chinese representation of a stirrup comes from a tomb figurine from South China dating to AD 302, but this is a single stirrup that must have been used only for mounting the horse. The earliest figurine with two stirrups probably dates from about 322, and the first actual specimens of stirrups that can be dated precisely and with confidence are from a southern Manchurian burial of 415. However, stirrups have also been found in several other tombs in North China and Manchuria that are most likely of fourth-century date. Most of these early Northeast Asian stirrups were oval in shape and made from iron, sometimes solid and sometimes applied over a wooden core, and this form would remain in use for many centuries thereafter.[27] It is interesting that in China, just as in Southwest Asia, heavily armored cavalry appeared before the introduction of the stirrup. Albert Dien has suggested that "it may well have been the increasing use of armored cavalry that provided the incentive and favorable environment for the development and widespread use of the stirrup."[28] This view is supported by the fact that some representations of heavy cavalrymen of the Wei–Jin period appear to show them with their legs encased in heavy wooden sideboards to stabilize them on top of the horse. As several authors have pointed out, the stirrup was never an absolute prerequisite for effective shock action by cavalry.[29] However, there is no denying that it conferred a certain advantage on its users by giving them greater stability and freedom of motion. Once the stirrup came into use, it must certainly have encouraged the employment of heavy cavalry on an even larger scale.

The basic organizational structure of the Jin military was inherited from Wei. There were two major components: an "inner" army of some one hundred thousand based at the capital city of Luoyang, and a

much larger "outer" army made up of garrisons stationed in the provinces. The inner army was under the direct control of the imperial court and included both a palace guard and a powerful mobile striking force, while the outer units were subordinated to regional military commanders (*dudu*) appointed by the court. In addition to these forces, there were also local troops raised by the various provincial governors (*cishi*). The Jin army reached its greatest size, perhaps as many as 700,000 men, shortly after the conquest of Wu in 280.[30] Following that event, Sima Yan decreed the abolition of the local forces as a step toward the demilitarization of an empire that was finally at peace after nearly a century of civil war. Civil and military chains of command were separated at the local level, with provincial governors losing the authority to command troops. The local forces were a relatively small part of the total military establishment, however, and the reform was far from complete. Some provincial governors, especially those in strategic frontier areas, continued to command local troops after the reform edict was issued in 282.[31]

Another Jin policy was to place substantial military power in the hands of princes of the imperial house. The Jin founder, Sima Yan, apparently believed that he would be able to guarantee the preeminence of the Sima family and establish a bulwark against the sort of coup by which he himself had overthrown the ruling family of Wei if he granted territorial fiefs to members of his own large and highly ramified lineage. Twenty-seven princes were enfeoffed soon after the founding of the dynasty in 265, a list which included three brothers of Sima Yan along with six uncles, one great uncle, and seventeen first and second cousins. Many other relatives were made princes later on.[32] Most of the princes received commanderies as their fiefs, with populations initially ranging from five thousand up to twenty thousand households. These allotments were later doubled, and a few princes were given even larger fiefs – up to a maximum of one hundred thousand households.[33] In 277 the princes were allowed to raise their own armies, ranging in size from 1500 men for the smallest princely fief to 5000 for the largest. They were very far from being independent rulers, however. The central government in Luoyang appointed their chief ministers, and the princes had to turn two-thirds of their tax revenues over to the center. The real power of the princes, in the case of those among them who were truly powerful, lay in their appointments as regional military commanders. By 290 six of the princes were serving as *dudu*. They held more than half of the regional commands in the empire, and these included the most important provincial centers: Xuchang on the great plain southeast of the capital, Ye in the rich and densely populated region north of the Yellow River, and Chang'an in the Wei River valley, a former capital

and the gateway to Central Asia. All of these places had very large garrisons from the "outer" army and held substantial stockpiles of military supplies.[34] Even the less important of the *dudu* controlled forces of more than twenty thousand men, far more than in their capacity as fiefholders.[35] And the already great power of those princes who served as regional commanders was further augmented after 290 when *dudu* were once again allowed to hold provincial governorships concurrently with their military offices, giving them full control of both civil and military affairs in their assigned regions.[36]

The obvious potential of the princes to become independent warlords was held in check as long as there was a strong leader at the center. After the death of the Jin founding emperor Sima Yan in 290 this condition no longer obtained. The throne went to the founder's feeble-minded second son, Sima Zhong, known posthumously as Emperor Hui, while real power fell into the hands of the new ruler's mother, the empress dowager Yang, and her father Yang Jun. Unfortunately for the future of Jin rule, the Yangs were not the only imperial consort family with political ambitions. Emperor Hui's consort, Empress Jia, immediately began to plot the downfall of the Yang family. Since Yang Jun's followers controlled the imperial guard, the empress turned for support to the princes who were serving as regional military commanders. She found two of the emperor's brothers, the Prince of Chu (Sima Wei) and the Prince of Huainan (Sima Yun), most amenable to her scheme, and both held powerful regional commands. Chu was the military commander at the strategic center of Jing province on the middle Yangzi, while Huainan controlled the headquarters of Yang province in the fertile lower Yangzi region. In the third lunar month of 291, a visit to the capital by the two princes (no doubt accompanied by a numerous armed entourage) provided the opportunity for a bloody coup d'état. Yang Jun perished with several thousand of his supporters, while the empress dowager Yang was deposed, confined, and later starved to death. Sima Liang, the Prince of Ru'nan, an uncle of Emperor Wu and a political opponent of Yang Jun, took over the reins of the government. Within a few months, however, Empress Jia contrived to rid herself of both Chu and Ru'nan by encouraging the impetuous, twenty-one-year-old Prince of Chu to kill his great uncle the Prince of Ru'nan. With Ru'nan out of the way, she arranged to have Chu executed on the grounds that he carried out the murder without imperial sanction. Empress Jia dominated the Jin court for the next decade, but her rule was inherently unstable since it was based on a balancing of the imperial princes against one another rather than a real centralization of military power.[37]

The period of Empress Jia's dominance came to an end in 300 when she was betrayed by Sima Lun, Prince of Zhao and younger brother of

the late Prince of Ru'nan. Originally an ally of the empress, Zhao now used his position as commander of the imperial guard to seize power in the capital and kill the empress and a large number of her partisans. He made himself prime minister, placed ten thousand soldiers under the direct control of his headquarters, and appointed his cronies to key positions. Zhao's blatant self-aggrandizement naturally aroused the opposition of other princes who were holding powerful regional commands. The first to act was the Prince of Huainan, who marched on Luoyang in the autumn of 300. Huainan's troops entered the capital and besieged the prime minister's office for several hours before their leader was cut down by hostile cavalrymen who had pretended to be bringing him an imperial edict. Having dealt with this challenge, the Prince of Zhao deposed Emperor Hui, imprisoned him in the citadel of Luoyang with the title of "retired emperor," and assumed the imperial throne himself at the beginning of 301. These moves, however, quickly stimulated the emergence of a much more formidable opposition movement in the provinces. In the third lunar month of 301, Sima Jiong, the Prince of Qi – a nephew of Emperor Wu and commander of the important garrison center of Xuchang, 90 miles southeast of the capital – denounced the Prince of Zhao and moved his forces toward Luoyang. Others raised troops to support him. These included Sima Ying, Prince of Chengdu, the regional military commander at Ye, north of the Yellow River, and Sima Yong, the Prince of Hejian and regional military commander at Chang'an, together with several of the provincial governors.[38] As armies totalling several hundred thousand men closed in on the capital from three directions, the Prince of Zhao's forces were defeated and driven back into the city. Zhao's own followers turned against him as the provincial armies entered Luoyang. Emperor Hui was freed from captivity, and the Prince of Zhao put to death by the victors. The whole affair had lasted only sixty days.[39]

Far from heralding a return to political stability, the victory of the princes of Qi, Chengdu, and Hejian marked the beginning of the Jin dynasty's descent into the abyss. The provincial magnates had openly and successfully challenged the center and imposed their will on the imperial court by force of arms. An era in which power struggles were settled by palace coups and the façade of central authority was preserved more or less intact now gave way to a period of warlordism and civil war in which disagreements were settled on the battlefield. With their conflicting ambitions, their strong regional bases, and their deepening suspicions of one another, the imperial princes were simply incapable of restoring a stable political order. The Prince of Qi assumed the dominant position in the capital, but when he was seen to have designs on the throne the others united against him just as

they had against Zhao. The Prince of Hejian once again sent strong forces toward Luoyang, but the decisive blow was struck by the Prince of Changsha, the sixth son of Emperor Wu. Originally a supporter of the Prince of Qi, Changsha commanded a body of troops within the walls of Luoyang, and with this force he was able to make a surprise attack on Qi's headquarters at the end of 302. After a day and night of fighting in the streets of the capital during which "arrow fells like rain and fires lit the sky," the Prince of Qi was seized and put to death – as were some two thousand of his partisans.[40] The new division of power between the Prince of Chengdu at Ye, the Prince of Hejian at Chang'an, and the Prince of Changsha in the capital lasted only a few months. Hejian plotted the assassination of Changsha, who got wind of it and killed a number of Hejian's agents. Hejian then sent an army of two hundred thousand men toward Luoyang, while some seventy thousand of Chengdu's men approached the capital from the northeast. The armies of the two princes menaced the capital from the eighth month of 303 to the first month of 304; within the walls the price of grain skyrocketed and even slaves were mobilized to supplement the badly outnumbered defenders. In the end the Prince of Changsha met with much the same fate that he himself had earlier visited on the Prince of Qi. One of his subordinate commanders in the city, a distant cousin named Sima Yue who held the title of Prince of Donghai, seized Changsha and handed him over to one of Hejian's generals, who had the hapless prince roasted to death over a slow fire.[41]

The court was then dominated, for a season, by the Prince of Chengdu, who had himself made heir apparent and installed a strong garrison in Luoyang while managing affairs at a distance from his base north of the Yellow River. In the seventh month of 304, Emperor Hui and his court rebelled against Chengdu's tutelage. The Prince of Donghai was appointed to lead the imperial guard against Ye, and the emperor himself accompanied the expedition. As the imperial column approached Ye, however, it was surprised and routed by Chengdu's forces near the town of Tangyin on September 9, 304. During the battle, arrows fell thickly around the imperial carriage and one of the attendants died trying to shield his master from the fusillade. In spite of this sacrifice, the emperor was struck by three arrows and wounded on the cheek; his clothing was stained with blood and he lost the imperial seals. Left alone on the field as his bodyguards and attendants scattered, he was brought back to Ye as a captive of the victors. The Prince of Donghai escaped to take refuge in his fief in the remote coastal region south of the Shandong peninsula, while the Prince of Hejian seized the opportunity to occupy Luoyang with his own forces.[42]

The Prince of Chengdu's triumph was short-lived, however. From the eighth lunar month of 304 he came under increasing pressure from the forces of two northern frontier generals, one of whom happened to be a younger brother of the Prince of Donghai. These northern armies were especially formidable because they incorporated substantial cavalry forces recruited from the Wuhuan and Xianbei peoples. After his armies had sustained several defeats in the field and efforts to enlist the Xiongnu of southern Shanxi to counter the enemy's cavalry had failed to bear fruit, Chengdu decided to abandon Ye. With a small escort and the captive emperor in tow, he fled to Luoyang where both he and the emperor became captives of the Prince of Hejian and were soon forwarded to Chang'an.[43] In the summer of 305 the Prince of Donghai reentered the fray, no doubt encouraged by his brother's success against Chengdu and by the fact that two other brothers also occupied strategic positions. Donghai's army advanced on Luoyang from the southeast, while his brothers approached the capital from the north and northeast. During the latter half of 305 the civil war, which had originally been confined to the environs of Luoyang, became general throughout much of North China as local governors raised militia forces and declared for either Hejian or Donghai.[44] The Donghai forces prevailed and took possession of Luoyang early in 306. Rejecting peace overtures from Hejian, Donghai sent his army toward Chang'an and smashed the opposing forces in a battle at Huxian on the south bank of the Yellow River near the mouth of the passes leading into Guanzhong (June 4, 306). Hejian and Chengdu fled into the southern mountains as the Xianbei warriors of Donghai's army entered Chang'an and subjected the city to a frightful pillage that reportedly claimed the lives of 20,000 citizens. Emperor Hui was returned to Luoyang but died before the end of the year, with the throne passing to his youngest brother, Sima Zhi, the twenty-fifth son of Emperor Wu, who would be known posthumously as Emperor Huai. The Prince of Chengdu and his sons were soon captured and put to death. As for the Prince of Hejian, he was offered a post at court by the new emperor, but was treacherously murdered by agents of one of Donghai's brothers while en route to Luoyang. The date of his death, February 6, 307, is often taken to mark the end of what came to be called the "War of the Eight Princes."[45]

This left Sima Yue, Prince of Donghai, as the undisputed master of the Jin imperial court and the only survivor among the major princely contenders. By that time, however, the prize that he had won was but a shadow of what it had been in 301, at the beginning of the civil war. It was not simply that thousands of soldiers had fallen on the fields of battle and thousands more civilians had perished in the sack of several of the empire's most important cities, but that the social and political

order had been irreparably damaged during the six years of chaos. Provincial governors ceased to obey orders from the center, internal migration increased from a trickle to a flood as refugees fled the violence in North China, and bandits arose everywhere. Moreover, the agrarian economy was a shambles. The *History of the Jin Dynasty* describes the situation in the following terms:

> By the Yongjia period [307–12] trouble and disturbances were very widespread. From Yongzhou eastward many suffered from hunger and poverty. People were sold [as slaves]. Vagrants became countless. In the six provinces of You, Bing, Si, Ji, Qin, and Yong there was a bad plague of locusts. … Virulent disease accompanied the famine. Also the people were murdered by bandits. The rivers were filled with floating corpses; bleached bones covered the fields. … There was much cannibalism. Famine and pestilence came hand in hand.[46]

The migration of population southward from Hebei to Shandong, from Shanxi to Henan, from Shandong and Henan to the lower Yangzi, and from Guanzhong to the Han River valley and Sichuan gave birth to local rebellions as the migrants met with resistance and exploitation from the indigenous populations and took up arms to protect themselves.[47] Even more worrisome, however, were the revolts of the non-Chinese peoples in North China. These had begun even before the outbreak of the War of the Eight Princes; some of the Xiongnu in Shanxi had risen in 294 and killed a number of local officials before they were crushed, and a much more serious rebellion of Xiongnu, Qiang, and Di broke out in the Guanzhong region two years later and was not put down until 299. Han and Di refugees escaping from the fighting in Guanzhong launched their own rebellion in Sichuan and occupied Chengdu, the most important city of the region, in 303. By far the most threatening of the risings by non-Chinese peoples, however, was the one begun by the Xiongnu chieftain Liu Yuan in 304, at the height of the Jin civil war.[48]

Early in the third century, the Wei founder Cao Cao had moved the majority of the Southern Xiongnu away from the frontier and into the interior of Bing province (modern Shanxi) where they might be more easily controlled. He split them into five "divisions" (*bu*) that were settled in different locations in the upper reaches of the Fen River valley, centered around the provincial capital of Taiyuan. By the 280s, the total population of the five divisions was reckoned at more than 29,000 encampments (*luo*).[49] Living interspersed among the Chinese population in a mountainous region very different from their original home on the steppe, it seems that these Xiongnu had turned from nomadism to sedentary stockbreeding, with some even taking up agriculture. They began to put down roots, and some became quite sinicized in their lifestyle. The trend toward sinicization was most pronounced among the tribal elite.[50] Liu Yuan, the hereditary chieftain of the Left Division and a descendant of the Xiongnu king (or *shanyu*) who had submitted to Han back in AD 50, was literate and fond of study. He spent part of his youth as a court attendant in

Luoyang, and he had received a thorough education in the Con-fucian classics and also became acquainted with the most important Chinese works of history and strategy.[51] In spite of their participation in Chinese elite culture, however, Liu Yuan and other Xiongnu leaders had a keen sense of separate identity and were far from satisfied with their subordinate position within the Chinese state. As one of them put it, "Since the fall of Han, Wei and Jin have risen one after the other; although our ruler has been given an empty title, he no longer has even a foot of ground as sovereign territory. From being princes and nobles, we have descended to the same level as ordinary registered households of commoners." The Jin government, he complained on another occasion, "uses us as if we were slaves."[52]

In 304 Liu Yuan took advantage of a commission from the increasingly desperate Prince of Chengdu (who was just then being driven from his base at Ye) to gather 50,000 warriors from among the five divisions of the Xiongnu. He then proceeded to proclaim himself "King of Han." The rituals that he performed for this occasion, which included sacrifices to the spirits of all of the emperors of the Han dynasty, left little doubt that he intended to make a bid for the imperial throne as the legitimate heir of the Han rulers in opposition to the usurpers of the house of Sima, his claim in this regard being based primarily on the earlier intermarriage between the Han and Xiongnu royal lines. Liu clearly hoped that his legitimist stance would win him substantial support among Chinese elites, and it may be taken as evidence of the extent to which he had accepted the ideology and political practices of those same elites.[53] However, his main effort involved coercion rather than persuasion. After meeting with frustration in his efforts to capture the provincial capital at Taiyuan, Liu shifted his attention southward and overran the southern part of Shanxi in 307. That same year, he accepted the allegiance of two large bandit forces that had been ravaging the Shandong peninsula and the plains of Hebei and Henan but had come under pressure from Jin armies. The more significant of the two was a mixed band of Chinese and barbarians led by an ex-slave of Xiongnu origin, a man named Shi Le about whom we shall hear a great deal more. Around this same time Liu also attracted the support of certain leaders of the Di and the Xianbei. With these accretions of strength, he sent out columns that defeated Jin armies in the field and plundered all the way to the gates of Luoyang in 308 and 309.[54]

Liu Yuan did not live to see the fall of the Jin capital, however. An astrologer's prediction persuaded the Xiongnu field commanders to postpone their final assault on the city until 311, and in the meantime the "Han" emperor fell ill and died on August 29, 310. Despite its legitimist pretensions, the Han regime proved no better than Jin when

it came to managing an orderly succession to the imperial throne. Liu Yuan's eldest son and designated heir was eliminated and replaced by an ambitious younger brother, Liu Cong, before the drive on Luoyang was resumed. The Prince of Donghai attempted to take advantage of this breathing space to buttress the defences of the capital, and sent out a summons to the provincial governors to provide reinforcements. When it became clear that his call was going to be ignored, the prince decided to transfer his base of operations to a safer location southeast of the capital in the Henan plain. He marched out of the city on December 22, 310, with 40,000 troops, heading southeast toward Xuchang. Some four months later, on April 23, 311, the Prince of Donghai died at Xiang County, on the Ying River. His army and entourage took this opportunity to move even farther to the east, in order to return the prince's body to his coastal fief for burial. On the way they were overtaken by Shi Le's cavalry. The barbarian horsemen formed a ring around the Jin footsoldiers, who trampled one another in their haste to escape from the arrows that came raining down upon them. In the end none succeeded in getting away, and the Jin army was reduced to a mountain of corpses. Those killed or captured by Shi Le on this occasion included not only soldiers but also a considerable number of government officials and imperial princes.[55]

Even before this disaster, many in Luoyang had already concluded that the situation of the capital was hopeless. The populace had been short of food for months; robbers went about openly in broad daylight, and corpses were piling up even within the halls of the imperial palace. Moreoever, the departure of the Prince of Donghai had stripped the city of most of its defenders. Given these conditions, reports that eight or nine of every ten officials had deserted their posts may not be very much of an exaggeration.[56] The Han forces began their assault on the capital in the fifth month, and the lead column quickly broke through one of the gates in the southern wall to plunder and burn some of the government offices. It was only two weeks later, however, after substantial reinforcements had arrived, that the Han troops ventured to occupy the rest of the city and force their way into the palace compound to lay hands on the palace women and the imperial treasures. Emperor Huai was taken prisoner as he attempted to flee the palace by a back gate opening onto the imperial park. The tombs of his ancestors were thrown open and plundered, the palaces and government offices set on fire. Later historians would place the civilian death toll in the tens of thousands.[57] The Xiongnu leaders chose not to move their seat of government to Luoyang, since it was surrounded by hostile territory that had yet to be pacified. Instead, they burned what remained of the city to the ground and returned to Shanxi with their loot and captives. At the height of Jin rule before

the War of the Eight Princes, Luoyang had had a population of about 600,000 occupying a space of three square miles within the city walls; it was the largest city in eastern Asia and probably second only to Rome as the largest in the world. After the cataclysm of 311, it would be nearly two centuries before the city was restored as an important center of population, commerce, and government.[58]

The fall of Luoyang marked the end of effective Jin rule in North China. After Emperor Huai finally perished at the hands of the Xiongnu in 313, a nephew was enthroned at Chang'an, but his writ did not extend much beyond Guanzhong – and even there he was heavily dependent on the goodwill of the local elites. The nephew, who would be known posthumously as Emperor Min, held out until 316, when Chang'an fell to the Han general Liu Yao. He was then taken to the Han capital and in 317 suffered the same fate as his predecessor. The Jin throne was then claimed by a relatively distant cousin, Sima Rui, who had been serving as military commander of the Lower Yangzi region for more than a decade.[59] Sima Rui and his descendants would keep Jin rule alive in South China for another hundred years, but the north was irrevocably lost; China would not again be united under the rule of a single imperial government until 589. Given the many weaknesses of the Jin regime at Luoyang and the fragility of the newly reunified state after the prolonged disunity of the Three Kingdoms period, it would be rash to view the Jin collapse as simply a consequence of the damage done by the War of the Eight Princes. Had the conflict of 301 to 306 not occurred, it is still possible to imagine another chain of events tipping the empire into chaos and sundering North from South. On the other hand, it is also possible to imagine the survival of the empire under the same set of circumstances. The same cannot be said of the situation that existed in the aftermath of the War of the Princes. Their selfdestructive conflict all but guaranteed the success of Liu Yuan and other leaders of rebellious marginal groups, ushering in the longest period of division in all of Chinese history.

Notes

1 Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1979), vol. 1, p. 113. The northern regime's ability to conquer the south at *this* time and not earlier has been attributed to the economic recovery of the north after the devastating civil wars of circa 200; see Zou Yuntao, "Shi lun San Guo shiqi nan bei junshi de xingcheng ji qi pohuai," in *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi yanjiu* (Chengdu: Sichuan sheng shehui kexue yuan chubanshe, 1986), pp. 128–45.

2 Tang Changru, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao Sui Tang shi san lun* (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 1993), pp. 29–30; also see Lien-sheng Yang, "Notes on the Economic History of the Chin Dynasty," in his *Studies in Chinese Institutional History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 113–14.

3 Rafe de Crespigny, *Northern Frontier: The Policies and Strategy of the Later Han Empire* (Canberra: Faculty of Asian Studies, Australian National University, 1984), pp. 72–3.

4 Tang Changru, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao Sui Tang shi san lun*, pp. 23–4, 30.

5 He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1958), pp. 14–15.

6 Lien-sheng Yang, "Notes on the Economic History of the Chin Dynasty," p. 149, with slight modification of Professor Yang's translation.

7 For the economy of this period, see He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, pp. 8–10, Lien-sheng Yang, "Notes on the Economic History of the Chin Dynasty," p. 117, and Tang Changru, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao Sui Tang shi san lun*, pp. 39–41.

8 Charles Holcombe, *In the Shadow of the Han: Literati Thought and Society at the Beginning of the Southern Dynasties* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), p. 8.

9 He Ziquan, "Wei Jin Nanchao de bingzhi," *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica*, 16 (1948), pp. 231–5; Gao Min, "Cao Wei shijia zhidu de xingcheng yu yanbian," *Lishi yanjiu*, 1989, No. 5, pp. 62, 64–5.

10 Tang Changru, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao shiqi de ke he buqu," in his *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilun shiyi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), pp. 2, 15; Yang Chung-i, "Evolution of the Status of 'Dependants,'" in E-tu Zen Sun and John DeFrancis (eds.), *Chinese Social History* (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1956), pp. 142–56; Gao Min, "Cao Wei shijia zhidu de xingcheng yu yanbian," p. 67.

11 Gao Min, "Cao Wei shijia zhidu de xingcheng yu yanbian," p. 66.

12 This sketch of the Wei system of military households is based on Gao Min, "Cao Wei shijia zhidu de xingcheng yu yanbian," pp. 61–75.

13 Pat Southern and Karen Ramsey Dixon, *The Late Roman Army* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 67–8.

14 Southern and Dixon, *The Late Roman Army*, pp. 46–52.

15 Tamura Jitsuzo, *Chuogoku shijo no minzoku ido ki* (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 1985), p. 11.

16 De Crespigny, *Northern Frontier*, pp. 382–3.

17 De Crespigny, *Northern Frontier*, p. 88; Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji* (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1987), vol. 1, p. 30; Lei Haizong, *Zhongguo wenhua yu Zhongguo de bing* (Changsha: Commercial Press, 1940), pp. 51–3.

18 De Crespigny, *Northern Frontier*, p. 387.

19 De Crespigny, *Northern Frontier*, p. 415.

20 Tang Changru, "Jindai beijing ge zu 'bianluan' de xingzhi ji Wu Hu zhengquan zai Zhongguo de tongzhi," in his *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi luncong* (Beijing: Sanlian, 1955), pp. 130–1; He Ziquan, "Wei Jin Nanchao de bingzhi," pp. 239–43.

21 Ni Jinsheng, "Wu Hu luan Hua qianye de Zhongguo jingji," *Shi huo banyuekan*, 1.7 (March 1, 1935), p. 39.

22 Tang Changru, "Jindai beijing ge zu 'bianluan' de xingzhi ji Wu Hu zhengquan zai Zhongguo de tongzhi," pp. 127–8.

23 Albert E. Dien, "The Stirrup and its Effect on Chinese Military History," *Ars Orientalis*, 16 (1986), p. 36.

24 Yang Hong, *Zhongguo gu bingqi luncong*, pp. 124, 130–1.

25 Chauncey S. Goodrich, "Riding Astride and the Saddle in Ancient China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 44.2 (December 1984), pp. 293, 299, 304.

26 Dien, "The Stirrup and its Effect on Chinese Military History," pp. 37, 38.

27 Dien, "The Stirrup and its Effect on Chinese Military History," pp. 33–5.

28 Dien, "The Stirrup and its Effect on Chinese Military History," p. 37.

29 Philippe Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Michael Jones (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), pp. 183–4.

30 *Zhongguo junshi shi*, vol. 3: *Bingzhi*, pp. 160, 161–5.

31 Tang Changru, "Wei Jin zhou jun bing de shezhi he feiba," in his *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilun shiyi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), pp. 145–50; Chen Yinke, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiangyanlu*, arr. by Wan Shengnan (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 1987), p. 37.

32 Fang Xuanling et al., *Jin shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), ch. 3, p. 52; Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 3, p. 460.

33 Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, p. 211.

34 Tang Changru, "Xi Jin fenfeng yu zongwang chu zhen," in *Wei Jin Sui Tang shi lunji*, vol. 1

(Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1981), pp. 1–2, 8–10; Tang Changru, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao Sui Tang shi san lun*, pp. 51–2.

35 *Zhongguo junshi shi*, vol. 3, p. 165.

36 Tang Changru, "Wei Jin zhou jun bing de shezhi he feiba," pp. 145–7.

37 This account follows Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, pp. 47–8, Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, pp. 215–16, and He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, p. 49.

38 Chengdu was the sixth son of Emperor Wu. Hejian was a more distant kinsman, the grandson of a younger brother of Sima Yi.

39 Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, pp. 50–2; *Jin shu*, ch. 59, pp. 1597–605.

40 *Jin shu*, ch. 59, p. 1610; Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, pp. 53–4.

41 *Jin shu*, ch. 4, pp. 100–1; He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, pp. 217–18; Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, pp. 55–7.

42 *Jin shu*, ch. 4, pp. 102–3; He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, p. 218.

43 *Jin shu*, ch. 59, p. 1618; He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, p. 219.

44 Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, pp. 61–2.

45 Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, pp. 63–5.

46 Lien-sheng Yang, "Notes on the Economic History of the Chin Dynasty," p. 181. Translation slightly modified.

47 He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, p. 57; Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, pp. 229–30.

48 Tang Changru, "Jindai beijing ge zu 'bianluan' de xingzhi ji Wu Hu zhengquan zai Zhongguo de tongzhi," pp. 144–5.

49 He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, pp. 51–3; Tamura, *Chuogoku shijo no minzoku ido ki*, p. 15. An encampment included several "tents" or household groups. The number of individuals in an encampment must have been highly variable. Modern estimates range from a low of ten to upwards of forty-two. See David B. Honey, *The Rise of the Medieval Hsiung-nu: The Biography of Liu Yüan*, Papers on Inner Asia, No. 15 (Bloomington, Ind.: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1990), p. 5 and p. 31, n. 18.

50 Tamura, *Chuogoku shijo no minzoku ido ki*, p. 14; Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, p. 43; Chen Yinke, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiangyanlu*, p. 99.

51 *Jin shu*, ch. 101, p. 2645–6.

52 *Jin shu*, ch. 101, pp. 2647, 2648.

53 Tamura, *Chuogoku shijo no minzoku ido ki*, p. 27; *Jin shu*, ch. 101, pp. 2648–9. Liu would declare himself emperor in 308.

54 Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, p. 90; *Jin shu*, ch. 101, pp. 2650–2.

55 Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, p. 220; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 87, pp. 2746, 2754–5, 2759–61.

56 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 87, pp. 2754–5, 2762.

57 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 87, p. 2763. For a popular account in English, see Arthur Waley, "The Fall of Lo-yang," *History Today*, 1 (1951), pp. 7–10.

58 Waley, "The Fall of Lo-yang," pp. 7, 10.

59 He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, pp. 59, 74.

CHAPTER THREE
The north under barbarian rule

The overthrow of the "Western" Jin regime based at Luoyang by Xiongnu under the leadership of the Liu family left China divided into two major segments, north and south, roughly along the line of the Huai River and the Qinling and Dabie mountains. In many ways this split recalled that of the Three Kingdoms period, and reflected the enduring geographical and cultural differences between the dry, temperate north and the warm and watery south, between the land of wheat and millet and the zone of wet-rice cultivation. Over the ensuing four centuries of division, these two vast regions would experience very different histories and develop in different directions. From their new capital at Jiankang (today's Nanjing) on the lower reaches of the Yangzi, the heirs of the Jin ruling class exerted their authority over the south, asserted their legitimacy and cultural superiority in the face of the barbarian usurpers in the north, and dreamed of a return to the ancient homeland of Chinese civilization. In the north, meanwhile, the violent and disorderly rule of the earliest non-Chinese conquerors gave way very gradually to a new Sino-barbarian synthesis, new political and military institutions, and a vigorous new ruling class that would succeed in reuniting the empire near the end of the sixth century. This chapter will deal with developments in North China up until about the middle of the fifth century.

The military successes of Liu Yuan and his heirs did not lead to the establishment of a stable political order in the north. The Han regime of the Xiongnu was not strong enough to extend its authority over all of North China. It faced serious challenges from several other barbarian groups, and was at the same time unable to win the support and cooperation of the Chinese population. The incessant violence and the collapse of the Jin administration produced tremendous social dislocation as many Chinese of the north abandoned their cities and villages to seek refuge from the storm. Migration of population from north to south had been underway as early as the second century AD, but the volume of this flow increased substantially during the late Jin disorders, especially the War of the Eight Princes. With the Xiongnu onslaught and the fall of Luoyang, the flow became a torrent.[1] According to one estimate, the north lost at least 300,000 households in the early years of the fourth century, with the Guanzhong region alone losing 40–50,000 households – approximately one-third of its

registered population.[2] On account of the obvious softness of many of the numbers found in the Chinese sources, the exact dimensions of this movement are unknown and unknowable. But all agree that the numbers involved were very large. While the main paths of migration were from north to south, running from Guanzhong to the Sichuan basin and from Henan and Shandong to the middle and lower Yangzi, some people also sought refuge with Xianbei rulers in southern Manchuria or with the Chinese governors of territories along the Silk Road in the far northwest. In some areas the migrations produced a sort of chain reaction; in Sichuan, for example, disorders sparked by refugees from Guanzhong prompted a large portion of the local population to move eastward down the Yangzi River to central China.[3] The upper class of landowners and government officials seems to have accounted for a disproportionate share of this movement; according to one estimate (which is, of course, open to question) more than 60 percent of the northern elite fled to the south between 311 and 325.[4] A common pattern was for a member of the local elite to lead his kinsmen, retainers, and neighbors to make the trek to safety as an organized community of several hundred households.[5]

Those who did not seek safety in flight to distant regions tried to protect themselves by abandoning their existing settlements and moving into nearby mountains or other easily defensible terrain. These people, like the migrants to the south, moved as organized groups. Led by respected members of the wealthier and more powerful local families, they constructed rudimentary fortifications, stored their grain within the walls, and defended themselves against marauding bandits and barbarian horsemen. Such fortresses might offer refuge to self-sufficient communities of several hundreds or even thousands of people. The most famous example of this phenomenon from the Jin period is that of Yu Gun, a minor official of Yingchuan commandery in central Henan. When his home was threatened by troops of one of the princely armies in 301, Yu led his kinsmen and other members of the community into the high country to the northwest. "In this high and dangerous defile, he blocked the footpaths, erected fortifications, planted [defensive] hedges, examined merit, made measurements, equalized labor and rest, shared possessions, repaired implements, measured strength and employed the able, making all things correspond to what they should."[6] On several occasions when bandits threatened his hilltop sanctuary, he was able to deter them simply by deploying his armed followers in orderly ranks.

Defensive communities of this sort had appeared before in Chinese history, as in the civil wars at the end of Eastern Han, and they would be used again and again in imperial China's recurrent times of troubles. As Jin rule dissolved in North China, forts became especially

common in Henan and Shandong but could also be found in Guanzhong, Hebei, and Sichuan. One early medieval text tells us that the Luo River valley near the old Jin capital was home to at least eleven of them, while other accounts have the Xiongnu bandit leader Shi Le capturing dozens of forts in the course of a single sweep through Henan.[7] With many cities and towns abandoned by their inhabitants, the forts became the real basis of local government. Fortress chiefs squabbled with one another for power at the grassroots level and were alternately coerced and courted by barbarian rulers and by the Jin émigré regime in the south. Some succeeded in organizing leagues of many forts and even received official appointments as local governors from various ruling authorities. The fortified community of refuge would remain the basic building block of local power in North China for several generations after the Jin collapse, until a stable political order was finally provided by the Northern Wei dynasty in the middle of the fifth century.[8]

Looming over this highly fragmented local scene were several sets of would-be rulers, none of which succeeded in establishing very much control for very long. The most important of these initially, if we exclude the "Eastern" Jin government at Jiankang, was the Han court established by the Xiongnu aristocrat Liu Yuan and his family. This group dominated southern and central Shanxi and, from 316, was also in possession of the Guanzhong region with its ancient capital of Chang'an. From the very beginning the Liu rulers had made a point of adopting the trappings of Chinese imperial government, including rituals, sacrifices, official titles, and a variety of symbolic gestures. This did not compensate for a deep instability at the center, however, and the transfer of power was repeatedly marked by bloodshed. Liu Yuan's designated heir had been murdered and replaced by a younger son, Liu Cong, in 310. Shortly after Liu Cong died in 318, *his* son and heir was murdered, together with many other members of the Liu family, by an ambitious imperial in-law. After more bloodshed, the throne was claimed by Liu Yao, a member of the ruling clan who had been orphaned at an early age and raised by Liu Yuan. Liu Yao moved the capital from Pingyang in the lower valley of the Fen River in Shanxi to his own power base at Chang'an, and changed the name of the regime from Han to Zhao. Preoccupied with its internal struggles, the Liu ruling group made very little progress toward subduing rival barbarian rulers in North China.

By the second decade of the fourth century the northern and northeastern rim of what had been the Jin empire was dominated by the Murong, Tuoba, and Duan clans of the Xianbei and the Yuwen clan of the Xiongnu. The Murong had occupied southern and southwestern Manchuria and set up a government that encouraged

agriculture and welcomed Chinese refugees, some of whom received official positions. The Murong leader professed loyalty to the Jin dynasty and accepted official titles from the Jin emperor in the south. The Duan, apparently a somewhat smaller group than the Murong, lived to the south and west, on the northern frontier of Hebei. Though often in conflict with the Murong, the Duan eventually developed a firm marriage alliance with their larger neighbor so that the legitimate heir to the Murong throne was normally the son of a Duan consort.[9] The Tuoba lived farther to the west, at the eastern corner of the Yellow River bend and in the northern part of Shanxi around the modern city of Datong. Between 304 and 314 the Tuoba leader, Tuoba Yilu, sent strong cavalry forces to assist the Jin governor of Bing province against the Xiongnu of Liu Yuan and his heirs. As a reward for his efforts, Yilu was ceded control of five counties by the Jin court and given the title of Prince of Dai (a traditional appellation for the North Shanxi region). Just as the Murong had formed a marriage alliance with the Duan, the Tuoba rulers intermarried with the Yuwen clan of the Xiongnu, who lived to the north of the Murong in the valley of the Sira Muren River. As a result they were sometimes drawn into conflicts between the Yuwen and the Murong, though for most of the period from 308 to 325 the Tuoba and Murong were at peace as the Tuoba focused on their struggle against the Xiongnu in Shanxi.[10]

The northwestern perimeter of the old empire was also beyond the control of the Han–Zhao regime. The Ordos region within the Yellow River bend, directly to the north of Liu Yao's capital at Chang'an, was home to Xiongnu groups that were largely independent of his authority. Farther to the west, in Liang province (that is, the part of modern Gansu west of the Yellow River), a strong Chinese governor named Zhang Gui had defeated local Xianbei groups in battle and sent troops to help defend Luoyang and Chang'an against the Xiongnu. After Zhang died in 320 power remained in the hands of his family, with the governorship passing to two of his sons and then to a grandson. Although they were for all intents and purposes autonomous local rulers, the Zhang governors of Liang province continued to profess allegiance to the Jin court in the south until 323 when military pressure from Liu Yao compelled them to become nominal vassals of Zhao. When Zhao began to show signs of weakness a few years later, Liang province once again proclaimed its allegiance to Jin.[11] South of the Qinling range, in the Sichuan basin, the dominant authority was Li Xiong, the Di leader of refugee groups that had fled from fighting in Guanzhong in the 290s. Li overthrew the local Jin authorities, seized the important city of Chengdu, and proclaimed himself emperor of the new state of Cheng in 306. He remained on the throne for thirty years and fought against the Zhao

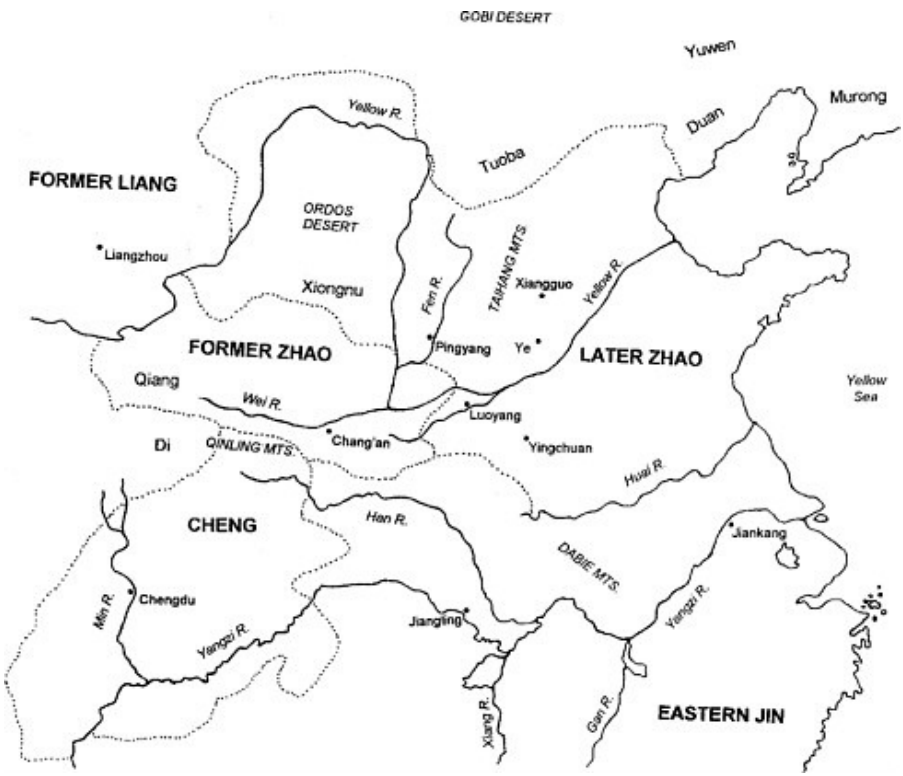
regime in Guanzhong.[12] By far the most serious threat to Liu Yao's authority, however, was his erstwhile ally Shi Le, who dominated much of the North China plain from his base at Xiangguo (near Ye) in southern Hebei.

Shi Le's background was very different from that of the aristocratic Liu family. The scion of minor tribal chiefs of a branch of the Xiongnu, he had been brought up among the Jie people of southern Shanxi.[13] As a young man he and other barbarians had been seized by agents of the Jin governor of Bing province and sold into slavery in Shandong. Shi eventually gained his freedom and became involved with a group of mounted brigands who supplied themselves with horses stolen from the imperial pastures. Gathering in escaped slaves, outlaws from the mountains and swamps, and herdsmen who included prisoners taken in military actions against the steppe peoples, this mixed force of Chinese and barbarians grew to impressive size and plundered its way along the lower reaches of the Yellow River during the War of the Eight Princes. Shi emerged as one of the leaders, and when the bandit army suffered a defeat at the hands of Jin forces he led the survivors to submit to Liu Yuan.[14] This connection enabled him to rebuild his following and to attract the allegiance of several independent groups of barbarian cavalry. Shi then returned to his old stamping ground on the eastern plain. By the time of the Jin collapse in 311 he dominated the Henan–Hebei–Shandong border region, and he soon extended his authority northward into Hebei and westward into central Shanxi. During this time he remained a vassal of the Han regime at Pingyang, albeit one with tremendous freedom for autonomous action.

Shi Le did not break with the Liu family until 319, when Liu Yao took the throne and moved the capital from Pingyang to Chang'an. Shi then proclaimed himself "King of Zhao." (Since Liu Yao had taken the same name for his own state, historians distinguish between the "Former Zhao" of Liu Yao and the "Later Zhao" of Shi Le.) Bounded by the Yellow River on the south, his realm covered roughly the same territory as the modern provinces of Hebei and Shanxi and included no fewer than twenty-four commanderies.[15] To the south, Henan and Shandong were contested territory where Shi's generals campaigned against forces loyal to the Jin government and many of the local fortress chiefs felt compelled to offer allegiance to both sides at once.[16] The vicinity of Luoyang, meanwhile, was the point where the power of Shi Le confronted that of Liu Yao. Although the city was by this time no more than a shadow of the metropolis that it had been under Western Jin, geography dictated that it was still an extremely strategic location. Located near the end of the line of hills stretching eastward from the mountains at the entrance of the Wei River valley, it was in effect the easternmost outerwork for the system of passes

leading into the Guanzhong region. And the massive walls of the Jinyongcheng, the citadel of Luoyang, offered a convenient defensive bastion and a secure location to stockpile grain and other military stores. In 328 Liu Yao led a very large army out of the passes to take the former capital from Shi Le's forces. This he succeeded in doing, but only after a siege that lasted one hundred days. Judging that Liu's army had been seriously weakened, Shi Le swept down on Luoyang with the largest force that he could muster, reportedly 27,000 cavalry and 60,000 foot soldiers. Liu Yao was defeated and taken prisoner in a great battle outside the gates of the city, and his state unravelled with shocking speed as Shi Le's troops forced their way into Guanzhong in 329 and killed the heir apparent.[17] The destruction of Former Zhao left Shi Le's Later Zhao in possession of most of North China, including Shanxi, Guan-zhong, and the entire central plain south to the line of the Huai River.[18] Despite its military success, however, Shi Le's state did not enjoy nearly the same degree of administrative control over its territory that earlier Chinese dynasties had done; its institutional foundations were extremely weak.

The regimes led by Liu Yuan, Shi Le, and their successors drew very sharp



distinctions between their Chinese and non-Chinese subjects, as did just about all of the later "barbarian" states that were founded in North China during the period of division. Still greatly outnumbered by their Han Chinese subjects in spite of the exodus to the south, the conquerors emphasized their separate identity in order to maintain control and resist absorption into the mass of the indigenous population. The Han–Former Zhao state of the Xiongnu Liu family formally assigned Chinese and non-Chinese to separate systems of administration in 314. In his capacity as emperor of Han, Liu Cong ruled over some 400,000 households of Chinese who were organized into units of 10,000 households. At the same time he gave his heir apparent the title of "Great Shanyu" (ruler) of the Xiongnu, placing him at the apex of a separate hierarchy of some 200,000 encampment groups (*luo*) of steppe origin, split into two great divisions and then into smaller units of 10,000 *luo*. Shi Le's Later Zhao employed a similar organizational scheme. The steppe people were the rulers and the warriors, and they alone bore the proud designation of "compatriots" (*guoren*) which identified them as citizens of the conquest regime. The Chinese, in contrast, were the subjects; they grew the grain, paid the taxes, and provided the labor power to support their barbarian masters.[19]

In these northern states the steppe people, who fought mainly as cavalry, formed the backbone of the army. Since all of their men were expected to be warriors, there was not much difference between the "barbarian" side of the administrative structure and the military establishment. The Great Shanyu, normally the designated heir to the imperial throne, commanded the army in the field.[20] The leaders of the groups of ten thousand carried military titles and acted as military commanders, while not just individuals but family groups were placed under the authority of military leaders. Families accompanied warriors when they were transferred from one place to another, and provided a manpower pool from which the strength of a fighting unit could be replenished as the need arose. Like the tribal organization of the steppe, this military structure could be easily expanded. Enemy generals who surrendered were given new titles but continued to lead their old followings and often remained in control of the same territories as before. Although the barbarians were certainly the dominant element in the armies of the various northern regimes, Han Chinese were by no means absent. Armies such as those of Liu Yao and Shi Le incorporated large numbers of Chinese. Some were captives taken in war, while others were conscripts raised from territories and populations under the control of the regime in question. In some

armies, such as that which Shi Le led to Luoyang in 328, Han Chinese probably outnumbered the barbarian component. But the majority of the Chinese troops were used for relatively inglorious functions such as hauling supplies or constructing siege works. When they appeared on the battlefield it was almost always as infantry, far less valuable than the barbarian cavalry that constituted the main striking force of a northern army. In contrast to the steppe cavalry, the Chinese footsoldiers were seldom a permanent component of the military establishment. Conscripted only when needed, they were sent home again at the end of the campaign.[21]

As a consequence of the partial depopulation of North China, the various regimes that arose in the region during the age of division often placed greater value on the control of persons than the control of territory. During the fourth and fifth centuries empty cultivable land could be found in abundance in the north, while the labor power to make that land productive was often in short supply. Human populations, therefore, were prominent among the spoils of victory, and successful campaigns were frequently followed by the forcible transfer of thousands or even tens of thousands of people from the newly occupied areas to the core territories of the victor. In some cases military campaigns were little more than gigantic slave-raids, with the occupied territories being abandoned after the population had been removed.[22] Captives taken in this way tended to be concentrated in the vicinity of the victor's capital – such as Liu Cong's Pingyang, Liu Yao's Chang'an, and Shi Le's Xiangguo. Liu Cong, for example, had 80,000 people moved from Chang'an to Pingyang after his forces overran Guanzhong in 316, and when Shi Le captured the same area in 329 he reportedly had no less than 150,000 families of Di and Qiang relocated to the neighborhood of his own capital in southern Hebei. In the second half of the fourth century, the powerful Former Qin state based at Chang'an would reverse the flow and bring large numbers of people *into* Guanzhong from the eastern plains. Populations concentrated in and around the state capital were relatively easy to guard and control, and they were close at hand to provide for the needs of the regular military forces and their families, which were also concentrated in the capital area.[23] Control was much weaker outside of the capital. Outlying areas might be held by detached garrisons of the central army, or by local fortress chiefs who had been compelled or persuaded to offer their allegiance to the conquest regime.

Some authors have claimed that the Han–Former Zhao state founded by Liu Yuan and the Later Zhao state of Shi Le represented very different institutional types: while the well-educated, highly sinicized Liu family sought to establish an imperial dynasty after the Chinese

model, Shi Le and his successors were simply the leaders of a bandit gang writ large, plundering and terrorizing the Chinese inhabitants of the north from the great armed camp at Xiangguo that they were pleased to call their "capital."[24] This distinction seems overdrawn. It ignores the many parallels between the institutional structures of the two states and the basic similarity of their modus operandi. Liu Cong's concentration of his forces at Pingyang and his exercise of control over surrounding areas from that base differed very little from what Shi Le was doing at Xiangguo. It is also important to consider the extent to which Shi Le adopted Chinese ritual and ceremonial forms in his rise to power, and the efforts that he made to coopt Chinese elites in the territories under his control. He brought Chinese officials to Xiangguo to set up a rudimentary administration, established schools to train a larger cadre of administrative personnel, and benefited from the wisdom of his Chinese advisor, Zhang Bin. Above all, Shi Le, like his counterparts in Pingyang and Chang'an, relied heavily on the cooperation of Chinese local elites – the fortress chiefs – to make his power effective in the outlying areas of his realm. When he captured forts, he made a point of bestowing appointments as generals or governors on the vanquished fortress chiefs and leaving them in place in the expectation that they would do his bidding in the future.[25]

With their extreme concentration of power at the center and their indirect rule over outlying areas through the Chinese fortress chiefs, both the Former and Later Zhao and most of the other barbarian regimes that were established in parts of North China were extremely fragile. Since the army and the state (or at least the part of the state that really mattered) were basically coterminous, a single catastrophic defeat suffered by the army on the battlefield could easily lead to the immediate collapse of the realm. This is precisely the fate that befall Liu Yao's Former Zhao when his army was destroyed at Luoyang in 328, and his regime would not be the last to end in this way. As conquest regimes established by barbarian chiefs on the basis of naked force, the northern states enjoyed very little legitimacy in the eyes of the Chinese who still constituted the majority of the population (especially when the Jin dynasty was still holding out in the south). Moreover, they were also resented by "captive" nonChinese populations who did not belong to the same ethnic group as the state's rulers. This was not necessarily an insurmountable problem as long as the rulers were able to maintain the effectiveness of their coercive apparatus. But should any weakness appear at the center, the outlying regions could easily slip away while captive populations in the vicinity of the capital deserted en masse. The instability of court politics in most of the northern states, and particularly the absence of clear, universally accepted rules regarding succession to the throne, meant

that debilitating conflicts could arise quite frequently at the political center, creating the perfect opportunity for powerful centrifugal forces that had been only temporarily held in check.[26] Given these conditions, it should come as no surprise that many of the regimes that arose in North China during the fourth and fifth centuries lasted no more than a dozen years or so, and very few managed to survive for more than two or three generations.

The Later Zhao state saw a relatively orderly transfer of power after the death of Shi Le in 333. However, Shi's son and chosen successor was soon deposed and replaced on the throne by a cousin, Shi Hu, who had been the most successful of Shi Le's generals. The portrait of Shi Hu presented in the seventh-century *History of the Jin Dynasty* is very much in keeping with the traditional Confucian historian's stereotype of the "bad last emperor" who has forfeited Heaven's mandate through his misbehavior.[27] He is depicted as a man of enormous sensual appetites, addicted to the pleasures of the harem and the hunt, a brutal tyrant whose "actions were harsh and cruel." He put vast numbers of peasant labor conscripts to work on his palace complexes at Chang'an, Luoyang, and Ye (whence he had moved the capital from Xiangguo), imposing great hardships on the people, and even dug up the tombs of "the rulers and worthies of former times" to find the treasures that had been buried with them. When he quarrelled with his heir apparent, he had the young man, his consort, and his twenty-six children killed and buried together in a single coffin; then he proceeded to massacre more than two hundred members of the prince's entourage for good measure.[28] Despite the obvious bias, it is quite possible that all of these stories are true. Whatever his failings, however, Shi Hu was also a strong and effective ruler who was able to hold his state together for more than fifteen years.

The same cannot be said of his heirs. The succession struggle was underway even before the ailing Shi Hu had breathed his last in 349. His designated heir apparent lasted only 33 days on the throne; the brother who overthrew and killed him held out for 183 days, and his replacement in turn survived for 103 days.[29] The man who emerged as the kingmaker at the Zhao court during this whirl of palace coups was a certain Shi Min, who held the most important military command in the capital. Shi Min's father was a Chinese of good family who had been captured as a boy and brought up as an adopted son of Shi Hu, and Shi Min himself had been raised as a warrior in the milieu of the barbarian court. Shi Min soon deposed the last of Shi Hu's line and eliminated most of the surviving members of the Shi family, including thirty-eight grandsons of Shi Hu. In 350 he took the throne for himself, reverting to his original Chinese surname of Ran and

changing the name of the state to Wei. Even before this time, he had already asserted a bitter and vengeful Han identity and initiated a genocidal campaign against all of the barbarians in and around Ye. Particular targets were the Jie people, who had been closest to the Shi family and whose alien, Central Asian features made it impossible for them to pass as Chinese. Ran Min offered rewards to Chinese who brought in the heads of slain barbarians. "In the space of a single day, several tens of thousands were decapitated." Ran personally led the Han Chinese to massacre the barbarians, who were killed without regard for wealth, sex, or age. "The dead numbered more than 200,000. Corpses were piled outside the city walls, where they were all eaten by jackals, wolves, and wild dogs."[30] (Ran's ability to carry out this slaughter, incidentally, suggests that by this time a considerable number of Chinese fighting men had been incorporated into the central army of Later Zhao on a more or less permanent basis.) Some of the barbarian troops managed to escape by fighting their way through the gates of the city or jumping from the walls. The survivors rallied in the nearby city of Xiangguo and called for help from the Yan state of the Xianbei Murong clan and other barbarian forces in North China. Soon three armies totalling 100,000 men were converging on Ran Min's base at Ye.

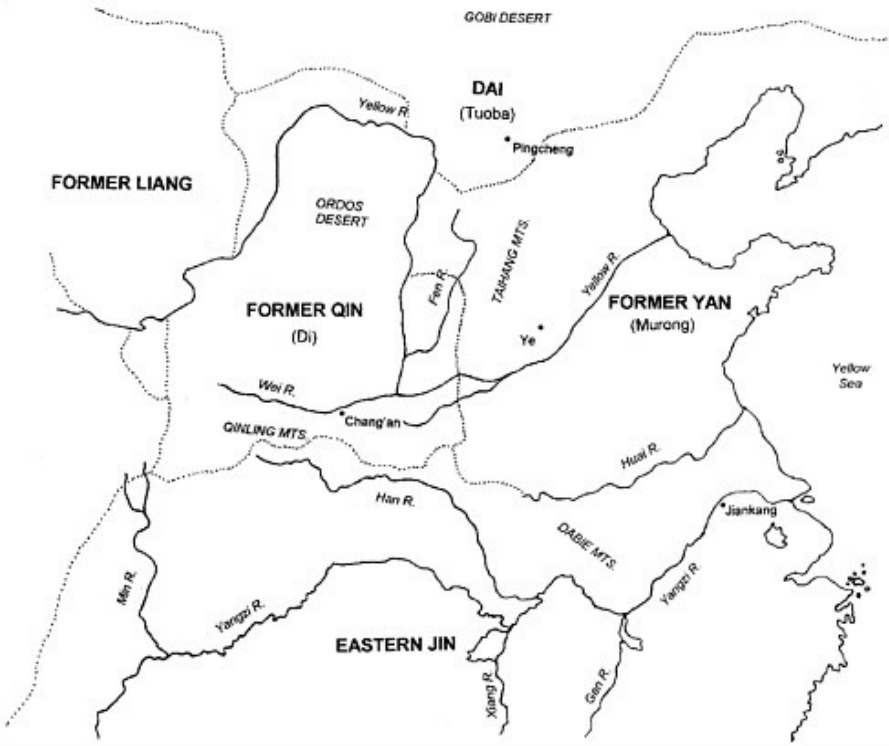
The chaos and bloodshed at the center led very quickly to a complete loss of control over the outlying regions of the empire. Many regional governors declared their allegiance to the Jin emperor in the south, while others defected to the Murong. In Guanzhong, the local magnates killed the officials installed by Zhao, occupied more than thirty forts, raised 50,000 men, and called for help from the Jin armies.[31] The populations that had been forcibly relocated to the capital and other strategic centers of the Zhao state seized the opportunity to abscond en masse in an effort to return to their original homes. When the various groups of Han Chinese, Qiang, Di, and other ethnic groups encountered one another on the roads they turned to robbery and murder. Once the effects of hunger and disease had been added to the equation, perhaps "only two or three of every ten succeeded in reaching their destinations."[32] Against this dismal background of societal collapse, Ran Min was brought to battle, defeated, captured, and put to death by the forces of Murong Jun of Former Yan, who was pushing southward into Hebei from his original base in southern Manchuria.

The Murong took advantage of their victory over Ran Min in 352 to annex core areas of the Zhao state in central and southern Hebei, extending their control as far as the Yellow River. They continued their expansion, now at the expense of Jin, in the years that followed. The capital was moved to Ye in 357, and by the time of Murong Jun's

death in 360 his Yan state had spread south of the Yellow River to include Shandong, much of Henan, and parts of northern Anhui. A Yan offensive against Jin reached the Huai River in 364, and Luoyang was captured the following year.[33] The Murong state was by no means the only beneficiary of Zhao's collapse, however. Under a strong and long-lived leader named Shiyijian, the Tuoba people who occupied the steppe margin around today's Datong in northern Shanxi were also extending the territory under their control. Like their fellow Xianbei of the Murong clan, the Tuoba benefited from a strong tribal organization and a relatively clear set of rules governing succession to the throne. Subjugated non-Tuoba groups were easily incorporated into the system as dependent clans and tribes. By about 366, the Tuoba claimed that they commanded several hundred thousand mounted archers and their rich pastures supported a million horses.[34]
A third group to benefit from the new situation, the Di people of Guanzhong, did not enjoy the same tradition of political independence as the Tuoba and the Murong. During the chaos of the early fourth century, a Di chief named Fu Hong gathered a strong following among his people. He gave his support first to Liu Yao and then to Shi Hu, who relocated very large numbers of Di and Qiang – including Fu Hong and his followers – from Guanzhong to the plains of Henan and Hebei. After Shi Hu died, Fu and his people, 100,000 strong, resolved to reclaim their homeland in the west. In order to accomplish this they first had to defeat a rival force of Qiang exiles who were marching west with the same intention, and after they had entered the passes they had to evict a renegade Zhao general from Chang'an. With these obstacles overcome, Fu Hong's son proclaimed himself king of Qin in 351 and took the title of emperor the following year. In 354 the nascent Di state in the Wei River valley repulsed an invasion by Jin forces from Henan, and within a few more years this vigorous new power was expanding its control in all directions.[35]
This state, known to historians as "Former Qin," saw both the apogee of its power and a sudden, irremediable collapse under the leadership of Fu Jian, a grandson of Fu Hong and nephew of the Qin founder who seized the throne from a cousin in 357. A vigorous, capable leader with tremendous drive and ambition, Fu Jian subjugated the wandering Qiang groups led by the Yao family in the same year that he took the throne. In 370 he sent his armies to invade the Murong state of Yan. His general and prime minister, Wang Meng, a Han who had risen from humble origins, defeated the Yan army in battle and captured Ye, the Murong capital, before the year was out. The conquest of Yan brought a great increase in the territory and population under Qin control, a gain amounting to 157 districts and a registered population of 2,460,000 households (or 9,990,000

individuals).[36] In 373, Qin forces struck in the opposite direction and seized almost all of Sichuan from the Jin dynasty. Three years later it was the turn of the Liang state northwest of the Yellow River and the Tuoba state of Dai to fall victim to Qin expansion. By 381, Fu Jian had united all of North China under his own rule and was pressing against the Jin empire in the south.[37]

The Di people must at first have seemed unlikely candidates for the role of military hegemon in North China. Unlike the Xiongnu and the Xianbei, the Di did not have a tradition of strong tribal organization under an aristocratic



Map 5 North China in AD 366

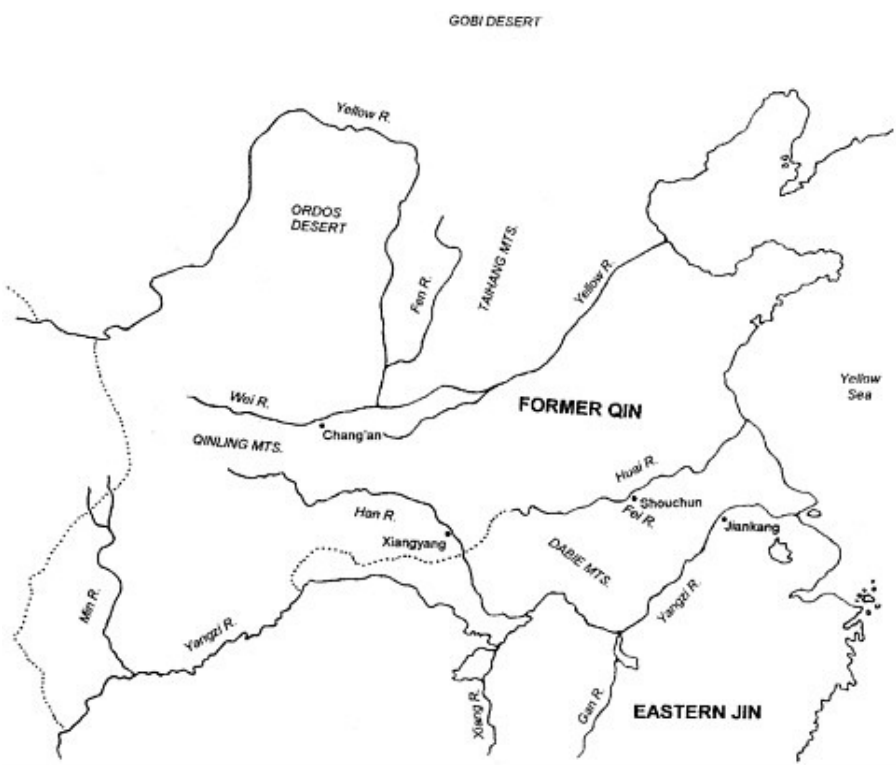
central leadership, but were accustomed to being governed by a rather large number of independent petty chiefs. While the pastoral economy of the Xiongnu and Xianbei was based to a large extent on horsebreeding, the Di tended to be shepherds and agriculturalists. They were more sedentary in their ways than their neighbors the Qiang, mingled more with the Han Chinese, and readily adoped many Chinese practices. In contrast to most of the other non-Han peoples, many of the Di fought as foot soldiers rather than cavalry.[38] It has

been suggested that the weakness of tribal organization among the Di was actually a source of competitive advantage in that it permitted Fu Jian to create a bureaucratic state structure in which appointment and promotion were based on merit.[39] An alternative explanation for the meteoric rise of the Qin regime might point not to the customs of the Di people or the institutions established by Fu Jian and his collaborators, but to the element of contingency in the disorderly period after Shi Hu's death and the power of self-reinforcing feedback loops to perpetuate existing trends once chance has given history a nudge in a particular direction. The initial Di successes in the early 350s may have been the result of superior leadership, luck, or the presence of the Di in superior numbers at the decisive points; thereafter, success built on success as the leaders of Qin incorporated defeated peoples into their own military machine. This process was facilitated by Fu Jian's willingness to assign members of the defeated ruling elites to high military and regional offices within his own power structure, and by the unwillingness of Chinese local officials and fortress chiefs to go to the wall for barbarian rulers who appeared to be losing. "It finally became the rule that as soon as a conquest was complete the loyalty obligations of the subjects to the conquered rulers ceased and went over to the conquerors."[40] All of this worked very well for Fu Jian as long as he continued to be perceived as a winner, but could easily produce a very different dynamic should he suffer a serious and obvious reverse.

The Qin state had a number of deep structural weaknesses, most of which were shared with many of the other non-Han regimes that made transient appearances in North China during the fourth century. Like the rulers of Later Zhao, Fu Jian moved defeated peoples to the vicinity of his capital in very large numbers. There were at least 100,000 households altogether, including the Qiang who had surrendered in 357 and the 40,000 households of Xianbei who were brought from Yan after 370.[41] Though the intention was that they could be more easily controlled in close proximity to the seat of power, they also represented a serious potential threat should the military strength of the Di people begin to wane. Another weakness of the Qin regime was its failure to break the power of the fortress chiefs, who continued to keep large numbers of peasants beyond the reach of the state's taxation and corvée systems.[42] And these local leaders were another potentially hostile force should the center begin to weaken. From time to time there were signs of unrest. In outlying areas, local rebellions arose among the Xiongnu in 366, the Qiang in 367, and the native tribes of Sichuan in 374. All of these risings were put down quickly and without too much difficulty, but at the center of power the ruling Fu clan itself was prone to internal divisions. In 367–8 Fu

Jian had to put down an armed revolt by four of his close kinsmen whom he had appointed to regional commands, and another Fu cousin, objecting to a reassignment to Sichuan, rebelled in northern Hebei in 380.[43] The Qin state dealt with these challenges easily enough, but when it suffered a major defeat in a "foreign" war against the Jin dynasty in 383 the entire edifice immediately began to crumble.

Fu Jian's forces had begun to apply serious pressure to the core areas of the Eastern Jin state along the middle and lower reaches of the Yangzi in 378, when the Qin ruler sent his son Fu Pi to besiege the fortress of Xiangyang on the Han River, gateway to the central Yangzi region. After a year-long siege, Xiangyang fell early in 379. About the same time, other Qin forces seized several strongholds along the Huai River and threatened the Jin capital of Jiankang on the lower Yangzi. A Jin counterattack soon drove the Qin armies back to the north side of Huai, but the situation remained precarious. In the summer of 383 a Jin army attempted to recover Xiangyang, but was driven off by a Qin relief column of 50,000 men. Fu Jian responded to this challenge by launching a new military campaign against the southern court. According to the "Chronicle of Fu Jian" in the *History of the Jin Dynasty*, this involved a



Map 6 North China in AD 383

mobilization on an unprecedented scale. We are told that the army that marched from Chang'an under the command of Fu Jian himself included 270,000 cavalry and 600,000 infantry, obtained by conscripting one out of every ten of the empire's registered adult males; "for a thousand *li* from front to rear, their banners and drums were in each other's view."[44] The army's vanguard was 250,000 strong, and separate columns were to push downstream from Sichuan to the west and advance from the lower reaches of the Huai in the east. "For a myriad *li* from east to west, they advanced together by water and land." The main effort was directed against Shouchun on the Huai River (east of Xiangyang), which fell to the Qin vanguard under Fu Rong in the lunar tenth month of 383. A Qin force of 50,000 men then moved east along the south side of the Huai to take up an advanced position along Luo Creek, a north-flowing tributary of the Huai, in order to block a Jin army of 70,000 approaching from the east. A night attack on this position by only 5000 Jin troops inflicted 15,000 casualties, including the Qin commander, and routed the survivors. The Jin army continued its advance and confronted a much larger Qin force under Fu Rong across the Fei River. Unable to assault this strong position, the Jin commander sent an envoy across the river to suggest that Fu pull back and allow him to cross, on the grounds that it was in the best interest of the invading army to seek a quick decision rather than a lengthy stalemate. Fu Rong consented, but in the expectation that he would be able to attack the Jin army when it was most vulnerable, before it had completed the river crossing. As soon as he signalled the withdrawal, however, his army collapsed in a panic-stricken rout. Fu Rong himself was killed in the stampede. The panic was soon communicated to the main body of the Qin host, which unravelled in short order and joined the flight.

The battle of the Fei River is usually considered one of the most decisive military encounters in all of Chinese history, since it is credited with bringing about the downfall of Fu Jian's empire and ensuring the survival of the émigré regime at Jiankang. However, almost all of our knowledge of the event is drawn from a single text, the "Chronicle of Fu Jian" in the *History of the Jin Dynasty*. As Michael C. Rogers has demonstrated, this is anything but an objective work of history. It contains strong fictional and mythic elements and was written and rewritten so as to serve not one but two distinct political agendas. According to Rogers, the chronicle was not based on authentic archival materials from Former Qin but was fabricated in the south to emphasize the accomplishments of Xie An, the statesman

who dominated the court at Jiankang in 383 and claimed credit for the victory, and to promote a mystique of the inviolability of the "legitimate" imperial regime based in the south. A second politically motivated overlay was added in the middle of the seventh century, when the *History of the Jin Dynasty* received its final redaction at the hands of official historians at the court of the second Tang emperor. Seeking to dissuade Tang Taizong from military adventures in the Korean peninsula, these scholar-officials exaggerated both the grandeur of Fu Jian's endeavor and the magnitude of his defeat. Rogers has suggested that the actual clash of arms may have been limited to the relatively small preliminary encounter at Luo Creek, with the Fei River battle presented in the chronicle being no more than a simulacrum of this real – and more or less insignificant – event. Rogers concludes that "there is at least a nucleus of fact that cannot be gainsaid. We have no reason to doubt 1) that a Chin [Jin] counter-offensive in 383 dislodged a Ch'in [Qin] force from Shou-ch'un, which the invaders had occupied for only a matter of days, and drove them back north of the Huai, and 2) that the Ch'in empire fell apart cataclysmically shortly after that event."[45] He chooses to reject the traditional view that there was a direct causal relationship between the battle and the Qin collapse, pointing instead to "internal tensions" as the primary reason for Fu Jian's downfall.[46]

However, even if we discount the evidence of the "Chronicle of Fu Jian," which draws a clear and direct connection between the Fei River battle and the collapse of Former Qin, the fact that so many subject peoples rose in revolt so soon after the military setback on the Huai suggests that the two events were not entirely unrelated. If Fu Jian had indeed taken the field in person, even relatively small reverses such as the Luo Creek engagement and the loss of Shouchun might have damaged the Di ruler's prestige to the extent that the leaders of other ethnic groups were encouraged to rebel against him. And if the losses in these encounters were concentrated among Fu Jian's most loyal and reliable Di troops, as Chen Yinke suggested, the impact would have been even greater.[47] Once subordinate leaders had made up their minds to rebel, Fu Jian's generous policy of appointing the chiefs of defeated peoples to high military commands and allowing them to retain control of forces composed of their own people guaranteed that they would have the means to do so. The first to turn against Fu Jian were members of the Murong family that had ruled the Former Yan state. Murong Chui, who had apparently commanded an independent column west of Shouchun during the 383 campaign, marched into Hebei and succeeded in recovering most of the territory that his family had once ruled; in 386 he proclaimed himself emperor of what came to be known as "Later Yan." In the

meantime, other members of the Murong family were operating farther west, in Shanxi and Guanzhong, where they besieged Fu Jian in his capital, Chang'an, in 384–5. Fu managed to escape when the city fell, only to be intercepted and killed by another rebel chief, the Qiang leader Yao Chang, who had once governed Sichuan for the Former Qin. Yao proclaimed himself emperor of Qin in 386 and began to consolidate his control over the whole of Guanzhong. This task was completed by his son Yao Xing, who defeated and killed Fu Jian's last heir in 394. Somewhat farther afield, the Tuoba regained their independence in the Dai region of northern Shanxi, and a Xianbei chieftain named Tufu Guoren established a "Western Qin" state in what is now Gansu. To the northwest of Western Qin, the Later Liang state was founded in the Gansu corridor by Lü Guang, a Di general whom Fu Jian had earlier sent to conquer the oasis states of the Tarim basin. In the aftermath of the collapse of Former Qin, the north was more politically fractured than it had been at any time since the fall of Western Jin.[48]

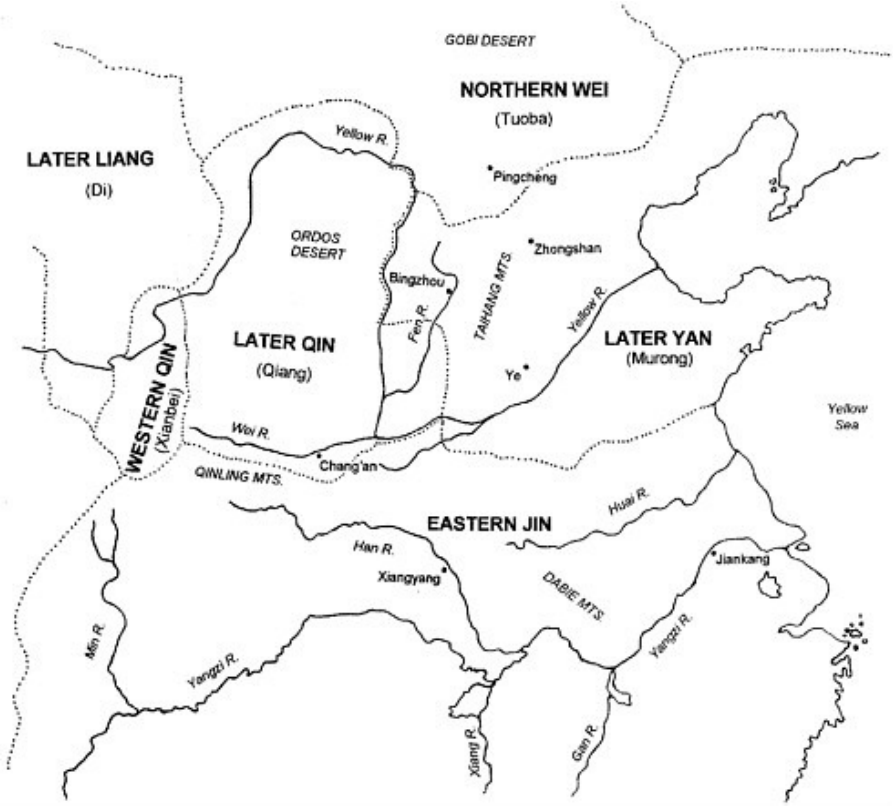
The Eastern Jin government at Jiankang took advantage of the disorder in the north to recover a large expanse of territory. Xiangyang was taken in 384, and in the following year Jin armies regained all of Sichuan in the west and advanced their northern border to the Yellow River. Some of the southern forces crossed the river into Hebei at this time, but they were soon recalled by a leadership satisfied with the huge gains that had already been made and more intent on the security of the south than the reunification of the empire.[49] This left the field clear for the various Qin successor states to contend for mastery in the north. The two that eventually emerged as the strongest were the Later Yan state founded by Murong Chui and the revived Tuoba kingdom, which had changed its name from Dai to Wei in 386. At first the two states were partners rather than rivals. Under pressure from hostile Xiongnu groups, the youthful Wei leader Tuoba Gui offered his allegiance to Murong Chui and received badly needed military assistance from the more powerful Later Yan state. With Yan backing, Tuoba Gui was able to defeat the Xiongnu challenge and incorporate many of the vanquished tribesmen into his own following. During the next few years, he concentrated on securing the rear of the Wei state by establishing his dominance over the nomadic peoples inhabiting the vast steppe region from the Greater Xingan mountains in the east to the great bend of the Yellow River in the west. In 388–9 he defeated the Kumoxi, Jieru, and Tutulin in the east, and in 390–1 he campaigned north of the Yellow River and defeated the Gaoju, Yuange, Helan, Gexi, Getulin, Chinu, and Chufu. Then, in 391–2, he defeated the Xiongnu who had been dwelling in the Hetao region south of the Yellow River bend and

added that valuable territory to the Wei kingdom. These victories over the steppe nomads yielded livestock, slaves, and other booty that could be used to reward the Tuoba warriors and cement their loyalty to the Wei state. And when Tuoba Gui began to contend for control of North China, he was in a uniquely advantageous position as master of the steppe and its resources.[50]

The partnership between the Tuoba of Wei and the Murong of Yan began to turn sour in 391, when the former refused to send the latter a tribute of horses, and by 394 Tuoba Gui was ready to turn his attention away from the steppe to compete with Yan for dominance in North China. According to Kenneth Klein,

> The question late in the year 394 then became whether the Murong were to be able to use their established state power to destroy the Tuoba, as the last marginal power between the cultivated fields of China and the open steppe, or whether the Tuoba were themselves to be able to compete successfully for the rule of a new agrarian empire from their position of dominance over the steppe.[51]

In the summer of 395, Murong Chui sent his heir apparent, Murong Bao, with a powerful army to attack Wei. Rather than confronting this challenge head-on, Tuoba Gui chose to lead his people several hundred miles to the west, into the Hetao region on the other side of the Yellow River. After overrunning the Wei capital region and capturing more than 30,000 families of Tuoba subjects, Murong Bao advanced to the east bank of the Yellow River. For the next several months, the two armies confronted each other across the stream. During this period, the Tuoba leader showed greater initiative by sending strong forces to the opposite bank to cut off segments of the Yan army and threaten its line of communications. With the onset of winter, Murong Bao began to retreat. Tuoba Gui pursued the Yan army with a fast column of cavalry and overtook his quarry at a place called Shenhe Slope, northwest of Horinger in today's Inner Mongolia. The Yan commander had taken few security precautions and was thus caught entirely by surprise when the Wei cavalry stormed into his camp on December 8, 395. The Yan army was routed with very heavy casualties, and Murong Bao was able to get away with only a few thousand men. This defeat was a heavy blow, but the Murong state had by no means reached the end of its strength. In the spring of 396, the aged Yan ruler Murong Chui personally led a new army into Wei's territory. An unwary



Map 7 North China in AD 395

Tuoba force was defeated near the Wei center of Pingcheng. But the Yan offensive came to an abrupt end when Murong Chui fell ill and died in his camp in the fourth lunar month of 396. It seems to have been the death of the Yan leader, much more than the battle at Shenhe Slope, that turned the tide of the war. From the summer of 396 the initiative clearly belonged to Tuoba Gui. Bingzhou in central Shanxi fell to Tuoba forces in the autumn, even as other Wei armies were crossing the Taihang mountains to invade the core Yan territories in Hebei. The Murong stubbornly defended their major centers, the capital at Zhongshan (modern Dingxian, Hebei) and the great city of Ye farther south, and remained capable of inflicting local reverses on the invaders in 397. Eventually, however, the Wei forces prevailed, with Zhongshan falling into their hands near the end of 397 and Ye at the beginning of 398. Remnants of the vanquished Murong clan kept a rump Later Yan state alive in southern Manchuria, while another group of fugitives founded a "Southern Yan" south of the Yellow River in today's Shandong province.[52]

Wei's expansionist efforts abated for a time after the conquest of Yan, and especially after the death of Tuoba Gui in 409. His son and

successor, Tuoba Si, who ruled until 423, was fond of Chinese poetry and literature and seemed to lack the martial drive of earlier Tuoba leaders. During his reign there were no major wars and only two campaigns against the nomadic Rouran in the north.[53] His successor, Tuoba Tao (known posthumously as Emperor Taiwu), was a very different character. According to the great eleventh-century historian Sima Guang,

> The lord of Wei was stalwart and courageous in his behavior. When confronting a fortress wall or an enemy formation he braved the stones and arrows himself. With the men on both sides of him falling dead and wounded one after another, he wore an expression that was no different from usual. On account of this the officers and men stood in awe of him, all of them exerting themselves to the utmost.[54]

Beginning in 430, he undertook a series of campaigns against the remaining independent states in North China. The most important of these were the Xiongnu kingdom of Xia in today's Shaanxi province, which had absorbed many of the territories that had been held by Qiang and Xianbei groups after the fall of Fu Jian's Former Qin; the state of Northern Yan, now ruled by Han Chinese who had supplanted the Murong; and the Xiongnu Northern Liang state in today's Gansu province. The first to fall was Xia, which succumbed to Wei military pressure in 431. The next to go was Northern Yan, which managed to hold out until 436. With the conquest of Northern Liang in 439, Tuoba Tao finally succeeded in uniting all of China north of the Yellow River for the first time since the collapse of Fu Jian's empire more than half a century before.

In addition to good military leadership and a fair amount of good luck, the Wei conquest of Later Yan and the various other states in North China was facilitated by several factors. The first and most obvious of these was the Tuoba's domination of the open steppe, which allowed them to draw upon its considerable resources to support operations elsewhere. Members of defeated tribes were incorporated into the Wei forces, and the steppe also provided the Wei armies with horses in very large numbers. In 391, for example, the Tuoba reportedly acquired 300,000 horses after crushing a single hostile tribe.[55] This number may be an exaggeration, but there can be little doubt that Wei control of the steppe enabled Tuoba Gui and his successors to field cavalry forces that were superior to those of their opponents. The Wei conquests were also facilitated by the timely deaths of a number of elderly leaders in rival states, which left the leadership in the hands of less capable and experienced successors.[56] The most obvious and important example of this was the death of Murong Chui in 396, but Tuoba Tao benefited from the same phenomenon in the 430s. The founder of Xia had died in 424 (or 425), the founder of Northern Yan in 430, and the ruler of Northern Liang in 433. Once their conquests had been accomplished, the Wei leaders

proved more skillful than other barbarian rulers in winning the loyalty of the defeated peoples. Like many of their predecessors such as Shi Le, the Wei rulers distinguished between a core element in their state, the so-called "compatriots" (*guoren*), and the mass of ordinary subjects. Almost all military commands and other positions of real power and authority were held by compatriots. Initially the designation seems to have been limited to the ruling clan and closely related groups, but the circle was later widened to include the elites of many of the defeated peoples. The Tuoba carefully cultivated marriage ties with fallen ruling houses, taking women of the Murong, Yao, and other such groups as royal consorts. Members of these families were admitted to the compatriot elite and received titles and government offices. Intermarriage also occurred with important Chinese clans.[57] Gradually, over the course of more than a century, a vigorous mixed-blood elite emerged in North China that could trace its descent not only from the Tuoba and other Xianbei groups, but also from Xiongnu, Qiang, Han Chinese, and many other peoples. It was this stratum that gave birth to the ruling group that reunited north and south under the authority of the Sui dynasty at the end of the sixth century, and its members continued to dominate the empire's political and military leadership for at least the first half of the Tang period.

Notes

1 Yang, "Notes on the Economic History of the Chin Dynasty," pp. 126–7; Chen Yinke, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiangyanlu*, arr. by Wan Shengnan, pp. 113–14.

2 Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, p. 223.

3 Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, p. 228.

4 Yang, "Notes on the Economic History of the Chin Dynasty," p. 127; also see Holcombe, *In the Shadow of the Han: Literati Thought and Society at the Beginning of the Southern Dynasties*, p. 27.

5 For one example, see the biography of Zu Ti in Fang Xuanling et al., *Jin shu*, ch. 62, p. 1694.

6 *Jin shu*, ch. 88, p. 2283; as translated by Holcombe, *In the Shadow of the Han*, p. 49.

7 He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, pp. 80–1; Chen Yinke, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiangyanlu*, p. 135; Tang Changru, "Jindai beijing ge zu 'bianluan' de xingzhi ji Wu Hu zhengquan zai Zhongguo de tongzhi," pp. 173, 181, 183; *Jin shu*, ch. 104, pp. 2711–12.

8 Tang Changru, "Jindai beijing ge zu 'bianluan' de xingzhi ji Wu Hu zhengquan zai Zhongguo de tongzhi," pp. 168, 172–3, 187; and Jin Fagen, *Yongjia luan hou beifang de haozu* (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1964), pp. 91–3. For examples of local conflicts, see *Jin shu*, ch. 62, p. 1695.

9 Kenneth Douglas Klein, "The Contributions of the Fourth Century Xianbei States to the Reunification of the Chinese Empire" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California Los Angeles, 1980), pp. 24–5, 27, 29, 34.

10 Jennifer Holmgren, *Annals of Tai: Early T'o-pa History According to the First Chapter of the Wei-shu* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1982), pp. 11, 29–33; Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, p. 132.

11 Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, pp. 113–14.

12 Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, pp. 127–8.

13 *Jin shu*, ch. 104, p. 2707; Tamura Jitsuzo, *Chuogoku shijo no minzoku ido ki*, pp. 34–5. The Jie were a non-Chinese people associated with the Xiongnu. According to some sources, they had Caucasian physical characteristics such as deep-set eyes, high noses, and abundant facial hair, suggesting a Central Asian or Iranian origin. Whether Shi Le was really a Jie or a Xiongnu, and the exact nature of the relationship between the two, is still a matter of disagreement. See David B. Honey, "Lineage as Legitimation in the Rise of Liu Yüan and Shih Le," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 110.4 (October–December 1990), pp. 618–20.

14 Tang Changru, "Jindai beijing ge zu 'bianluan' de xingzhi ji Wu Hu zhengquan zai Zhongguo de tongzhi," pp. 153–4.

15 *Jin shu*, ch. 104, p. 2730.

16 *Jin shu*, ch. 105, pp. 2738–9.

17 Dien, "The Stirrup and its Effect on Chinese Military History," p. 39; *Jin shu*, ch. 105, pp. 2744–5; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 94, pp. 2963–5.

18 He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, pp. 90–1.

19 For the structure of the northern states, see Chen Yinke, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiangyanlu*, pp. 108–9; Tang Changru, "Jindai beijing ge zu 'bianluan' de xingzhi ji Wu Hu zhengquan zai Zhongguo de tongzhi," pp. 158–64; and *Zhongguo junshi shi*, vol. 3: *Bingzhi*, p. 175. Kenneth Klein should be credited for the translation of *guoren* as "compatriot."

20 Zhou Weizhou, *Han Zhao guo shi* (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1986), p. 187.

21 *Zhongguo junshi shi*, vol. 3, pp. 176–83.

22 Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 2, pp. 241–2. For examples of population removals carried out by Shi Le's forces, see *Jin shu*, ch. 104, pp. 2724, 2725, and ch. 105, pp. 2741 and 2745.

23 Chen Yinke, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiangyanlu*, pp. 110, 128–33; *Jin shu*, ch. 105, p. 2745.

24 See, for example, Wolfram Eberhard, *Conquerors and Rulers: Social Forces in Medieval China*, 2nd edition revised (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), pp. 122–3.

25 He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, p. 89. For examples of Shi Le's use of Chinese forms and his promotion of Chinese-style education, see *Jin shu*, ch. 104, pp. 2720, 2729, and ch. 105, p. 2735.

26 For a discussion of the succession problem, see Klein, "The Contributions of the Fourth Century Xianbei States to the Reunification of the Chinese Empire," p. 30.

27 For a discussion of the "bad last emperor" stereotype, see Arthur F. Wright, "Sui Yang-Ti: Personality and Stereotype," in idem (ed.), *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1960), pp. 47–76.

28 *Jin shu*, ch. 106, pp. 2761, 2767, 2772, and ch. 107, pp. 2781–2.

29 This paragraph is based on chapter 107 of the *Jin shu*, especially pp. 2788–94.

30 *Jin shu*, ch. 107, pp. 2791–2.

31 *Jin shu*, ch. 107, pp. 2790, 2796.

32 *Jin shu*, ch. 107, p. 2795.

33 Michael C. Rogers, *The Chronicle of Fu Chien: A Case of Exemplar History*, pp. 7–8; Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, p. 95.

34 Wei Shou, *Wei shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), ch. 24, p. 609; Holmgren, *Annals of Tai*, pp. 118–19; Klein, "The Contributions of the Fourth Century Xianbei States to the Reunification of the Chinese Empire," pp. 32–3; He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, p. 106.

35 Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, pp. 101–2. Fu Hong died in 350, before his people entered the promised land.

36 Gerhard Schreiber, "The History of the Former Yen Dynasty," *Monumenta Serica*, 15 (1956), p. 117; for Wang Meng, see Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, p. 103.

37 He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, p. 95.

38 Eberhard, *Conquerors and Rulers*, p. 124; Richard B. Mather, *Biography of Lü Kuang* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959), p. 11; Jiang Fuya, *Qian Qin shi* (Beijing: Beijing shifan xueyuan chubanshe, 1993), pp. 7–10.

39 Klein, "The Contributions of the Fourth Century Xianbei States to the Reunification of the Chinese Empire," pp. 36–9.

40 Schreiber, "The History of the Former Yen Dynasty," p. 126; also pp. 111 and 123.

41 Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, p. 276.

42 Jiang Fuya, *Qian Qin shi*, pp. 84–6.

43 For the various revolts, see Rogers, *The Chronicle of Fu Chien*, pp. 122–5, 137, 146–8.

44 Michael C. Rogers, "The Myth of the Battle of the Fei River," *T'oung Pao*, 54 (1968), p. 64. For the earlier Qin operations against Jin, see Lü Simian, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao shi* (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 1983), p. 226.

45 Rogers, *The Chronicle of Fu Chien*, p. 62.

46 Rogers, "The Myth of the Battle of the Fei River," p. 71; also see *The Chronicle of Fu Chien*, p. 3.

47 Chen Yinke, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiangyanlu*, p. 233.

48 He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, p. 103. For more detailed treatment of the political history of this period, see Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, pp. 96–116. For Lü Guang's career, see Mather, *Biography of Lü Kuang*.

49 Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, pp. 283–5.

50 Klein, "The Contributions of the Fourth Century Xianbei States to the Reunification of the Chinese Empire," p. 105; also pp. 53–6, 67.

51 Klein, "The Contributions of the Fourth Century Xianbei States to the Reunification of the Chinese Empire," p. 65.

52 For a summary of these events, see Klein, "The Contributions of the Fourth Century Xianbei States to the Reunification of the Chinese Empire," pp. 69–72; a more detailed treatment can be found in Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, pp. 137–44. For the battle of Shenhe Slope, see Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 108, p. 3424.

53 Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, pp. 145–6.

54 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 120, p. 3796.

55 Mao Han-kuang, "Bei Wei Dong Wei Bei Qi zhi hexin jituan yu hexin qu," in idem, *Zhongguo zhonggu zhengzhi shi lun* (Taipei: Lianjing, 1990), pp. 40–1.

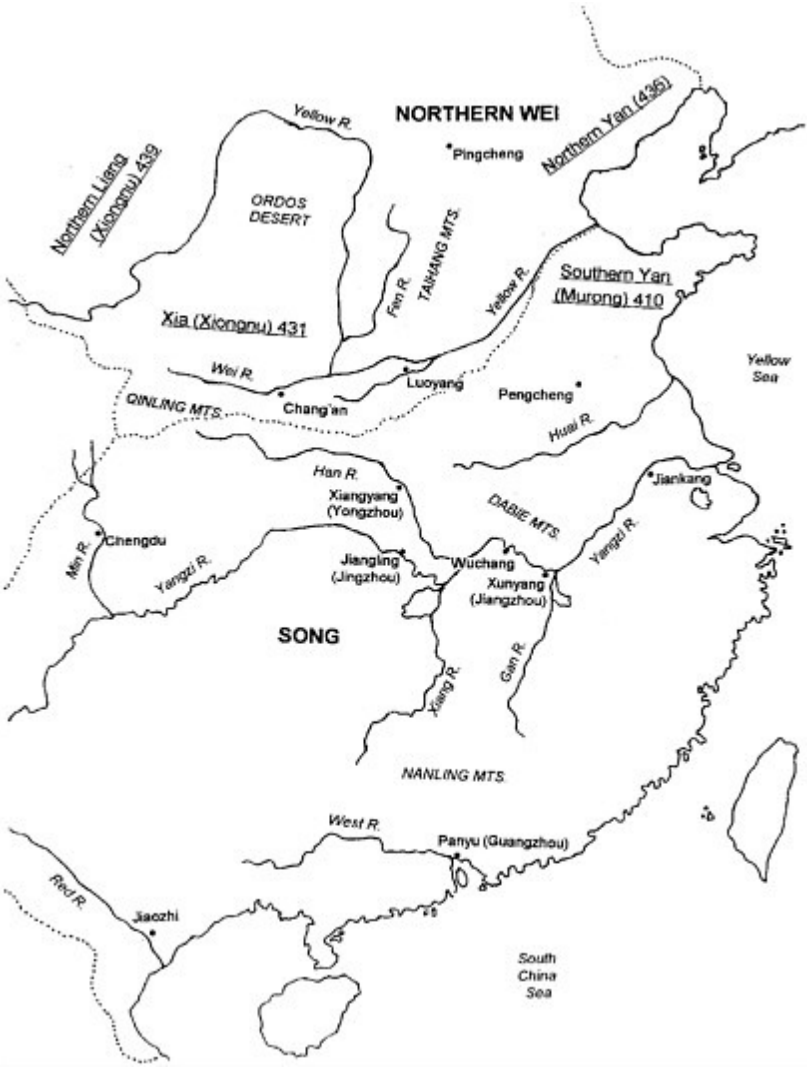
56 Klein, "The Contributions of the Fourth Century Xianbei States to the Reunification of the Chinese Empire," p. 93.

57 Klein, "The Contributions of the Fourth Century Xianbei States to the Reunification of the Chinese Empire," pp. 95, 103. Also see Mao Han-kuang, "Bei Wei Dong Wei Bei Qi zhi hexin jituan yu hexin qu," pp. 42–4.

CHAPTER FOUR
The south under émigré rule

Although they had first been incorporated into the Chinese empire by the first emperor of Qin more than five hundred years earlier, the vast territories south of the Yangzi River confronted northern refugees fleeing the collapse of Western Jin with much that was strange and unfamiliar. In contrast to the densely settled plains through which the Yellow River flowed, the south must have seemed a raw, peripheral, and relatively empty land. Population figures from the middle of the second century AD gave the south only about 35 percent of the registered population of the empire, even though it accounted for considerably more than half of the total land area.[1] The southern population gained ground relative to that of the north over the next two centuries, thanks in large part to successive waves of migration, but the south would long continue to be the less populous half of the Chinese ecumene. The Han Chinese inhabitants of this region were not scattered evenly across the face of the land, but were for the most part tightly concentrated in several major centers of population. One of these centers was the region immediately to the southwest of the mouth of the Yangzi, including the rich, well-watered agricultural lands around Lake Tai and Hangzhou Bay. This was the heart of the Wu kingdom during the Three Kingdoms period, and in earlier times it had been the territory of the ancient states of Wu and Yue. The core of Jin's Yang province, this region had its own landholding elite families and its people spoke a dialect distinct from that of the north. It was here, at Jiankang on the south bank of the great river, that the Jin émigré elite of the early fourth century chose to establish their capital. The other major center was located upstream, where the Han River enters the Yangzi from the north. This region – Jing province for administrative purposes – included a number of important towns such as Jiangling on the Yangzi and Xiangyang on the Han. Also part of Jing province was the well-populated valley of the Xiang River to the south, in what is now Hunan. A lesser center was the area that became known as Jiang province, stretching south from Wuchang and Xunyang (today's Jiujiang) on the Yangzi past the Boyang Lake to the valley of the Gan River. The distant cities of Panyu (Canton) and Jiaozhi (today's Hanoi) on the southern side of the Nanling range were less prominent as centers of Han settlement but played an important role in Chinese trade and other contacts with the peoples of Southeast Asia.

All of these major Chinese settlement areas were situated in low-lying plains and river valleys where the terrain was well suited to the cultivation of rice in flooded paddy fields. Between them lay vast expanses of forested hills and mountains inhabited by aboriginal peoples such as the Man, Liao, Li, and Xi, most of whom had yet to be assimilated to the Chinese way of of life. In this warm, watery, mountainous, and heavily forested environment, so different from the dusty plains of the north, the Yangzi River and its major tributaries such as the Han, Xiang, and Gan rivers were the threads that connected the various Chinese centers of the south to one another. Travel and trade tended to



Map 8 North and south in AD 464 showing lesser states conquered by Northern Wei and Song

follow the rivers, and so too did military operations. Ever since the days of the rival kingdoms of Chu, Wu, and Yue, long before the unification of the empire by Qin, the men of the south had specialized in waterborne combat on their lakes and rivers. This tradition was continued in the Three Kingdoms period with much larger and more elaborate vessels outfitted with more sophisticated weapons, and the maintenance and employment of naval forces remained an important element in the warfare of all of the southern dynasties based at Jiankang.

In contrast to North China, which was divided and re-divided among a bewildering profusion of barbarian statelets, the south held together as a single realm for the entire period from the founding of Eastern Jin in 317 to the northern conquest of Chen in 589. From beginning to end the southern state included all of the Chinese territories south of the Yangzi, but its northern and northwestern boundaries varied greatly over time. The Sichuan basin was first incorporated into the southern realm in 347. It was then lost to Fu Jian's Former Qin in 373, recovered in 385, and finally lost to Western Wei in 553. The northern border sometimes ran along the Huai River, about eighty miles north of Jiankang, but this was not always the case. In the first half of the fifth century the southern court was able to extend its control as far as the Yellow River, incorporating most of today's provinces of Shandong and Henan. By 572, on the other hand, it had lost everything north of the Yangzi. From 317 almost down to the fall of Jiankang, the territory between the Yellow River and the Yangzi was the main arena of armed contention between north and south.

While the Chinese of the south managed to retain a semblance of unity, albeit within shifting boundaries, they did not remain subject to the same ruling family for the entire length of the north–south division. There were five southern dynasties, some of which lasted little more than a single generation. In 420 the Eastern Jin dynasty founded by Sima Rui was replaced by the Song dynasty of Liu Yu; in 479 Song in turn gave way to the Qi dynasty, in 502 Qi yielded to Liang, and in 557 Liang was succeeded by the last of the southern dynasties, the Chen. Not all of these dynasties came to power by overthrowing their predecessor directly, but every single one of the transfers of power was made possible by an armed rebellion or civil war. Despite its superficial appearance of unity, the southern realm was riven by a number of deep divisions that gave rise to tremendous political instability. There were tensions between the northern émigrés and indigenous southern elites, between the highest-ranking aristocratic families and lesser elite lineages, and between all of the

magnates, both northern and southern, and would-be centralizers at the imperial court. Ministers and high officials from the great families competed to dominate the government, free peasants were hard pressed by the heavy exactions of the imperial state, and aboriginal groups were threatened by the creeping encroachments of Han settlers. The high level of militarization and the decentralization of command authority required by the ongoing confrontation with the barbarian powers of the north made it all too likely that many of these conflicts would be resolved by recourse to violence.[2] In particular, the existence of two widely separated power centers, one at Jiankang and the other at Jingzhou on the middle Yangzi, would have ominous implications for the internal stability of the southern dynasties.[3]

The Eastern Jin regime was vexed by military weakness almost from the moment of its inception. The founder, Sima Rui, was a prince of the imperial house who had commanded the Jin forces in the south from his base at Jiankang since 307. Despite the fact that he held a variety of impressive titles, the military force at his disposal was very limited and he was far from having a monopoly of military power in the Yangzi valley. When he claimed the throne for himself in 317, he did so with the support of powerful members of several great aristocratic families who had retreated to the south after the fall of Luoyang. Particularly prominent in the early years of the Eastern Jin were the Wang family of Langye, the Wang family of Taiyuan, and the Yu family of Yingchuan. All of these families had played a major role at the Western Jin court at Luoyang, and all would provide empresses for the Jin royal family at Jiankang. Two other families, the Huan of Qiaoguo and the Xie of Chenguo, would rise to dominate the court later in the fourth century. The Huan and Xie did not supply empresses and have been described as "a 'new' aristocracy risen from obscure military origins with no history of ties to the Lo-yang court."[4] Most of these aristocratic refugees came south to the Yangzi valley with dependants and armed retainers, and they were eventually able to carve out large estates for themselves, especially in the peripheral frontier districts. Even with the addition of these forces, however, the military support for Sima Rui's regime was extremely weak. In order to survive, the new Eastern Jin court found it necessary to enlist the support of the most powerful native families in the south.[5]

These families were mainly concentrated in the commanderies of Yixing, Wuxing, and Wu by the shores of Lake Tai, the ancient heartland of the lower Yangzi region. They were major landholders, with estates that could survive as self-sufficient enclaves, and they had large numbers of tenants, servants, and other dependants who were capable of bearing arms when the need arose. Some of these families emphasized scholarly accomplishments, but many others, such as the

Zhou of Yixing, had strong traditions of military leadership. The southern magnates were never enthusiastic supporters of the Eastern Jin court, dominated as it was by northern émigrés, but in the end the great majority of them did give it their support. Both the court and the magnates wished to maintain order in the lands south of the Yangzi, and both shared a common interest in resisting the inroads of barbarian conquerors such as Shi Le and Shi Hu.[6] An emperor of the Jin royal house served as an important symbol of unity and legitimacy, a role in which a replacement from another family would find it impossible to win acceptance.[7] And the southern elites were ultimately willing to accept a scheme of aristocratic hierarchy that guaranteed their prestige, privilege, and local power even if it did not assign them to the topmost rung. One historian, Kawakatsu Yoshio, has also suggested that southern elites were moved to support and strengthen Sima Rui's government at Jiankang in the hope that it would be able to exert some control over the numerous and often unruly armed bands of northern refugees that had been pouring into the Yangzi valley.[8]

The movement from north to south during the chaos of the early fourth century involved far more than just a handful of aristocrats and their followers. For example, Zu Ti, the scion of an old but much less exalted line of office-holders from southern Hebei, led several hundred families south to the Huai River after the fall of Luoyang.[9] Members of many other lower-ranking provincial elite families also chose to seek safety in the south, and brought with them their slaves, tenants, armed retainers, and neighbors as well as other unrelated commoners who adhered to them for protection. The total numbers involved in this movement must have been substantial. Figures from the middle of the fifth century indicate that at that time there were approximately 900,000 persons in the south who were officially registered as northern migrants or their descendants.[10] Unfortunately, it is not possible to project this number back into the early fourth century. There were several subsequent waves of migration during periods of great disorder in the north (as when Fu Jian's empire fell apart after 383), and we know nothing of the migrants' rate of natural increase or the numbers that had escaped registration. These late figures make it very clear, however, that by far the largest émigré community was located along the banks of the Yangzi not far from Jiankang, and that there were also a substantial number of northerners settled on the middle Yangzi and in the Han River valley. The new arrivals maintained an identity that was quite distinct from their southern neighbors. When the Jin government got around to registering the migrants, it did not incorporate them into the existing southern administrative units, but assigned them to new registration units

(often with no actual territory) bearing the same names as the home districts they had left behind in the north. This was a relatively simple administrative task since the usual pattern was for people from a single northern county to migrate as a group and then settle close to one another in the south, and it also allowed the court to create new official posts (as county magistrates and commandery administrators) for the men who led them.[11] Altogether, the Eastern Jin court set up 236 counties and 81 commanderies in exile.[12] Many of the migrants were accustomed to the use of arms, and their leaders of the local elite stratum often came from families that were better known for courage and skill in combat than for cultural accomplishments.[13] These exile communities were an obvious potential military power base for the Eastern Jin regime, but it would be some time before the court was able to organize and utilize them effectively.

The military weakness of the Eastern Jin court during its early days was revealed by the rebellion of Wang Dun, a member of the Langye Wang family who had helped Sima Rui to set up his government at Jiankang. As the leader of one the largest bodies of armed men at the disposal of the new regime, Wang had been sent upriver to establish control over Jing province in 319. However, the emperor and his most trusted officials were not at all comfortable with their dependence on overmighty subjects such as Wang Dun. In 321 one of the centralizers at court, the secretariat director Diao Xie, won the emperor's approval for a scheme to create a strong army directly under central control by confiscating slaves and other dependent retainers (many of whom were already experienced fighting men) from the powerful families, particularly those that were recently arrived from the north.[14] This policy and several personnel appointments that seemed to be aimed at reducing his power prompted Wang Dun to revolt at Wuchang at the beginning of 322. Wang's army descended the Yangzi, defeated Diao Xie's force of ex-slaves at Shitoucheng, an outlying fortress on the shore of the river just northwest of Jiankang, and compelled the now defenseless Jin court to submit to Wang's dictation. Sima Rui was allowed to remain on the throne, and when he died of natural causes near the end of the year, he was succeeded by his son, Sima Shao (known posthumously as Emperor Ming). Wang Dun took the title of "shepherd of Yang province" and established his headquarters at the river port of Gushu, within easy striking distance of the capital. However, his dominance over the Jin court began to unravel when he fell seriously ill in the lunar fifth month of 324. Emperor Ming seized this opportunity to attempt to throw off Wang's tutelage, and Wang sent his army to attack the badly outnumbered defenders of Jiankang. The court was saved from disaster primarily by the timely death of Wang Dun. His less capable elder brother Wang Han not only failed to

take Jiankang but was utterly unable to hold Wang's followers together. Within a couple of months Wang Han and his principal associates were dead, in some cases the victims of betrayal by their own subordinates or allies.[15]

This outcome should not, however, be taken as evidence of the strength of the Jin court. In the operations against the rebels, the court had had to rely very heavily on the leaders of a few of the larger northern émigré bands because of the shortage of military forces under its direct control. One of the leaders who played a major role in putting down Wang Dun's rebellion was a man named Su Jun, a native of what is now Shandong province, who had begun his career as a fortress chief in the days of the Western Jin collapse. The court rewarded him with titles and offices for his contribution to the suppression of the Wang Dun rebellion, and with a following now numbering in the tens of thousands he was sent to guard the northern frontier along the Huai River. Like Wang Dun, however, Su quickly came into conflict with officials in the capital who were trying to strengthen the authority of the center and clip the wings of the regional magnates and semi-autonomous military commanders. About to be dismissed from his command, Su rebelled in the tenth lunar month of 327 and marched on Jiankang, taking the city and looting the imperial palace in the second lunar month of 328. The court was able to crush him only after securing the assistance of two upriver military leaders, the more important of whom was the Jing provincial governor Tao Kan.[16] Although he continued to pay lip service to the court's authority and rendered valuable service on occasion, the septuagenarian Tao, a native southerner risen from relatively humble origins, had also set up what amounted to a semi-independent state on the middle Yangzi after the defeat of Wang Dun's forces.[17] In both the Wang Dun and Su Jun affairs, the Jin court had few reliable military forces at its direct disposal and therefore found itself dependent upon the goodwill of men such as Tao Kan. Efforts to concentrate more power at the center, such as the conscription of slaves and retainers advocated by Diao Xie in 321, were likely to trigger rebellions that would leave the court in an even weaker position than before. And the campaigns of Wang Dun and Tao Kan suggested an ominous tendency for regional leaders from Jing province to sweep down the Yangzi to set the affairs of Jiankang in order. In the first half-century or so of its existence, the survival of the Eastern Jin court owed a great deal to its ability to play one warlord against another.

South China was a very highly militarized society, not only at the time of the rebellions of Wang Dun and Su Jun but straight through to the end of the south's independent existence in 589. The most fundamental military problem that the successive southern dynasties

faced throughout this period was how to secure enough military manpower, and of sufficient quality, to protect the court against both its northern enemies and its own overmighty subjects. A variety of different solutions were attempted; none was an unqualified success. In the early years of Eastern Jin rule in the south, the government sought to retain the Western Jin system of designating hereditary military households to create a permanent manpower reservoir for the army. These efforts encountered difficulties from the start. The number of military households originally located in the south was extremely small, and serious losses were suffered during the collapse of the Western Jin regime in the north. The most obvious sources of new military households were usually off limits for a variety of reasons. Registered households of taxpaying commoners were relatively few in number due to the fact that powerful families, both southern magnates and northern émigré elites, sheltered large numbers of dependants; to convert commoners to military households would be to diminish a tax base that was already much too small. To claim the dependants as military households, however, was sure to antagonize the powerful families and might even provoke a rebellion. The court was sometimes willing to take this risk, as with Diao Xie's plan in 321 and similar measures introduced by another centralizing Jin statesman at the close of the fourth century, but slaves, "guests," and retainers taken from the estates of the rich could not be the main source of manpower.

In spite of all the difficulties, ways were found to create new military households, with the result that this remained the prevalent form of military service obligation under both the Eastern Jin and Liu Song dynasties. One important source of new military households were the vagrants, vagabonds, and unregistered family groups that did not happen to enjoy the protection of the powerful. Not long after the battle of the Fei River, one Jin general had his troops surround a large marsh in Hailing county, just north of the Yangzi mouth. They set fire to marsh grasses and drove out nearly 10,000 families of vagrants, who were then registered as military households.[18] Convicts might also be consigned to service in the army. According to the letter of the law, the dependants of such convict-soldiers were not supposed to become hereditary military households, but it seems that this provision was honored mainly in the breach.[19] Another source of new military households were the various aboriginal peoples inhabiting the hills and mountains of the south. Conflicts were frequent between the southern governments and the Liao people, who were found mainly in the mountainous regions of southeastern Sichuan, and during the Song and Liang dynasties there was also serious fighting with the Li people who inhabited the mountains separating today's Guangdong province

from Hunan and Jiangxi. The most numerous and far-flung of the southern aboriginal groups was the Man, who could be found all the way from the mountains of southwestern Hunan to the hill country of southern Henan. Fighting between the Man people and the Han Chinese was most intense under the Liu Song dynasty, in the middle years of the fifth century.[20] Captives taken in these conflicts were often resettled as military households, and the numbers could be very large. During a single punitive expedition in the winter of 449–50 against the Man living in the mountains north of the Han River, the Song general Shen Qingzhi took 28,000 prisoners; it has been estimated that over the course of his entire career Shen captured more than 200,000 Man who were then enrolled as military households.[21]

This sort of "recruitment" of vagrants, convicts, and tribal peoples provided the southern dynasties with soldiers, but could not guarantee that they would be either reliable or effective. It was surely a contributing factor in the steady decline of the social status and morale of military households. In the Western Jin, military households seem to have enjoyed a status not significantly different from that of ordinary commoners; by the time of the Liu Song dynasty in the fifth century, however, they were regarded as little better than government slaves.[22] The terms of service could be exceedingly harsh. Not every adult male from every military household was called upon for service (the standard rate may have been one in three), but a man who was tapped could remain in the ranks from the age of fifteen or sixteen until he was well into his sixties. If a man had no younger kinsman to replace him, he might be forced to serve to an even more advanced age. If a man fell ill or suffered a debilitating injury, he might find it necessary to substitute an underage family member in order to win his own release.[23] Desertion became a serious problem, and the discontent of the soldiery eventually made the system untenable. During the civil conflicts of the Liu Song period, there were many cases of generals releasing large groups of soldiers (and their families) from their status as members of military households in order to reward them for past service or boost their loyalty and morale at the beginning of a campaign.[24] By the sixth century, under the last of the southern dynasties, the Liang and Chen, hereditary military households were no longer a significant source of manpower.[25]

The government had always found it necessary to supplement the men of the military households with troops drawn from other sources. It had never renounced its authority, dating back to Han times and earlier, to conscript commoners for military service whenever necessary, but this authority was used sparingly by the southern dynasties. Commoners were called for service only in times of special need, and were returned to their homes as soon as the crisis was over.

They were often used as laborers or in logistical support roles rather than as combat troops, and military commanders appear to have taken a rather dim view of their fighting quality.[26] Better-quality troops could be gotten by the voluntary enlistment of "recruits" (*mubing*) who served for a limited term and assumed no hereditary obligations. Fighting men of this sort began to supplant the hereditary soldiers during the Song and Qi dynasties, and were the dominant component in the armies of Liang and Chen.[27] During this period, even the private retainer bands (*buqu*) of military commanders came to be composed of voluntary recruits rather than servile dependants whose status passed from father to son.[28] At first, a great many of the new recruits were probably freed soldiers from military households who chose to reenlist under better terms of service.[29] There was much that did not change. Just as in the past, under the military household system, it was usual for the families of soldiers to be concentrated in or near military garrisons and to follow the military unit when it was transferred from one location to another.[30] Although the burden of hereditary military service had been lifted from the soldiers and their families, the new system was by no means free of abuses. During the Liang dynasty, for example, it was possible for rich men to enroll themselves as nominal soldiers as a means of gaining the accompanying tax exemption. Troop strength, morale, and fighting power remained serious problems down to the very end of the southern dynasties.[31]

The best soldiers ever raised by the southern dynasties, at least in terms of battlefield effectiveness, were the so-called "Northern Headquarters Troops" (*bei fu bing*). In 376 Xie An, the dominant minister at the Eastern Jin court, put his kinsman Xie Xuan in command of the forces north of the Yangzi and gave him the authority to recruit and organize a new army. Xie Xuan directed his recruiting efforts at the large number of northern émigré families that had settled along the banks of the Yangzi not far from the capital in the cities of Jingkou, Guangling, and Jinling, and he seems to have achieved considerable success. By the time of Fu Jian's attack on the south in 383 there were 80,000 of the Northern Headquarters troops, and they played the major role in the defeat of the northern invaders. These troops remained an important component of the Eastern Jin military establishment, and were prominent participants in the Jin civil wars in the early years of the fifth century and the suppression of the great rebellion of Sun En and Lu Xun.[32] The founder of the Song dynasty, Liu Yu, used his command of the *bei fu bing* as a springboard to power. By the time of the major Song campaign against the Northern Wei in 450, however, these very effective troops had all but disappeared from the south's military array. One possible explanation

is that the losses suffered in the fighting of the early fifth century were so heavy that the Northern Headquarters forces could not be reconstructed, especially given that the émigré population from which they had originally been recruited was no longer being reinforced by a flow of new arrivals from the north.[33]

There are a number of other perplexing questions regarding the Northern Headquarters troops. Historians do not agree whether they were voluntary recruits who demonstrated the superiority of *mubing* over soldiers drawn from military households, pointing the way to the new military institutions of the later southern dynasties, or whether they were themselves classified as hereditary soldiery either before or after their recruitment by the Northern Headquarters.[34] The ease and speed with which this powerful force was created is also puzzling, especially in light of the insurmountable obstacles that the Eastern Jin court encountered in its efforts to raise strong, reliable troops during its early years at Jiankang. It is possible that the threat posed by Fu Jian's empire and ambitions in the late 370s persuaded the leaders of the northern émigré bands settled in the neighborhood of Jingkou to cooperate with the Jin court to a much greater degree than had hitherto been the case. And by the 370s, too, the institutional structure of counties, commanderies, and provinces in exile had long been in place to accommodate the northerners within the Jin official system. The leaders of the émigré bands, as we have seen, were made the heads of counties and commanderies. At the same time, they were also incorporated into the official military structure since the units of civil administration doubled as military headquarters. (The "Northern Headquarters" was an alternative name for the military headquarters of the province-in-exile of Southern Xu, based at Jingkou on the Yangzi.[35]) These leaders had their own followings of hereditary military retainers. In other words, by the 370s the means existed for leaders closely associated with the Jin court (in this case, the Xie family) to build a powerful army very quickly by recruiting middle-level officers who could be expected to bring their own subordinates with them.[36] A very similar process appears to have taken place along the Han River in the middle of the fourth century, but there the immediate beneficiary was not the court at Jiankang but the Jing provincial governor Huan Wen and his heirs.[37]

After the death of Xie An in 385, Sima Daozi, the younger brother of Emperor Xiaowu (r. 373–96) and the uncle of Emperor Ming (r. 397–418), emerged as the dominant figure at the Jin court. Like Diao Xie and many others before them, he and his son Yuanxian sought to rein in the provincial governors and increase the power and authority of the center. However, as a result of the personnel changes in Jiankang, the troops of the Northern Headquarters were no longer a reliable

asset upon which the centralizers could depend. On the contrary, this force came to pose a deadly threat. It had become the customary practice of Eastern Jin to appoint provincial governors who held important military commands concurrently and were often given control of several adjacent provinces. This practice was well suited to meet the need for effective military command and coordination against the northern threat to the border regions along the Han River and the Huai, but at the same time it left the court at the mercy of the provincial leaders.[38] This was not a problem, of course, when a provincial leader was the kinsman and trusted political associate of the dominant minister at court, as had been the case in the days of Xie An and Xie Xuan. At the end of the fourth century, however, there was no such link between court and camp. The middle Yangzi and Han River valley were in the hands of Huan Xuan, whose father Huan Wen, a powerful northern émigré chief, had been made governor of Jing province in 345. Huan Wen had gone on to reconquer Sichuan for Jin and launch two major offensives against the north. His military might, based on the large northern exile community in the Han River valley and on the fact that this was one of the few places in the southern realm suitable for the breeding of cavalry mounts, was bequeathed to his heir Huan Xuan.[39] Downstream, military power rested mainly in the hands of Wang Gong, a high-ranking aristocrat and elder brother of Xiaowu's empress; as governor of Yan and Qing with headquarters at Jingkou, he had direct command authority over the Northern Headquarters troops.[40]

Tensions between Wang Gong and the Jiankang government led by Sima Daozi prompted the former to flex his military muscle in 397 and force Sima to execute two members of his party. When Sima resumed his political maneuvering against him, Wang marched on the capital in the lunar seventh month of 398. On this occasion Sima Daozi and his party were saved by a bribe paid to Liu Laozhi, the most important of the Northern Headquarters generals, whose defection led in short order to the defeat and elimination of Wang Gong. In the hope of strengthening the court against the provincial governors and freeing it from dependence on the men of the Northern Headquarters, in 399 Sima Yuanxian ordered the conscription of private slaves and agricultural dependants to build up the military forces in the capital. This measure antagonized both its lowly targets and the powerful southern families from whom they were going to be taken, and was a factor contributing to the outbreak of Sun En's rebellion on the southern shore of Hangzhou Bay that same autumn.[41]

Sun En was a large landowner from an aristocratic northern family, but he found common ground with the native southern elite because so many of them were adherents of the "heavenly masters" Daoist sect

just as he was. His revolt quickly spread to eight commanderies around Hangzhou Bay and Lake Tai and gathered more than 100,000 adherents.[42] The Jin government sent Liu Laozhi's Northern Headquarters troops to crush the rebels, and a series of seesaw campaigns ensued until Sun finally committed suicide in the spring of 402 after a crushing defeat at the hands of the government forces. The war was noteworthy for Sun En's use of ships, the waterborne mobility of his forces, and their use of island refuges off the coast of Zhejiang; it also saw the emergence of a general named Liu Yu as a key lieutenant of Liu Laozhi.[43] Sun's brother-inlaw Lu Xun led the surviving rebels south to Guangzhou, where the government pacified him with the provincial governorship in 405.

At the beginning of 402, Sima Yuanxian and Liu Laozhi prepared to launch an expedition against Huan Xuan, who had made himself the master of all of the upriver territories (including the modern provinces of Hunan, Hubei, Sichuan, and Jiangxi) while the court was distracted by Sun En's rising. Huan struck first, descending the Yangzi from Jiangling to Xunchang (today's Jiujiang) in the second lunar month of 402. At that point Liu Laozhi chose to defect to Huan's side, bringing the Northern Headquarters troops along with him, and with this accession of strength Huan was easily able to occupy Jiankang. Once in possession of the capital, Huan not only killed Sima Yuanxian, but also removed Liu from his troop command, drove him to commit suicide, and then claimed the throne for himself (as the first emperor of the "Chu" dynasty) at the end of 403. This did not sit well with the veterans of the Northern Headquarters. In the second month of 404 Liu Laozhi's former lieutenant Liu Yu, who enjoyed strong support among the officers of the *bei fu bing*, rose at Jingkou and marched on Jiankang.[44] Huan Xuan fled back to his home base at Jiangling, regrouped, and then came down the Yangzi again with a much larger force. The decisive encounter occurred at Zhengrong Island, near today's Echeng, Hubei, on June 10, 404. As the two river flotillas steered into battle, Liu Yu's field commander, a Northern Headquarters general named Liu Yi, took advantage of his upwind position to set fire to many of Huan's vessels.[45] Huan's force collapsed, and Huan himself was soon murdered by an associate while trying to escape to Sichuan. Emperor An was restored to the throne, but from this time forward Liu Yu was the real master of the Jin court. He would devote most of his attention to campaigns against the north, but had to fight twice more in the south before his power was secure. The Guangzhou governor and erstwhile rebel chief Lu Xun took advantage of Liu's absence with the army in the north to strike at Jiankang in 410; frustrated by the hastily recalled northern armies, he was eventually hounded to his death in northern Vietnam. Then, in

412, Liu Yu marched on Jiangling and eliminated his former colleague Liu Yi, who had established himself in Huan Xuan's old power base on the middle Yangzi. It was only in 420, shortly after the death of Emperor An, that General Liu Yu finally took the throne as the first emperor of the Song dynasty.

In order to tie the empire more firmly together and prevent the sort of internal conflict that had torn the Eastern Jin empire apart during its final years, the Song founder established a policy of appointing members of his own family to the major provincial commands; two of his sons, for example, were assigned to control the key upriver garrisons at Jingzhou and Jiangzhou.[46] This arrangement worked well at first, and the thirty-year reign of the second Song ruler, Emperor Wen, was a time of domestic tranquility rarely encountered in the annals of the southern dynasties. The murder of Emperor Wen by the crown prince, Liu Shao, in 453 touched off another round of civil strife. Liu Shao's brother, Liu Jun, who had been campaigning against the Man people in the Dabie Mountains of Hubei, marched on the capital, defeated and killed the usurper and placed himself on the throne. Jun's subsequent efforts to remove a powerful uncle from his entrenched position as governor of Jing province ignited a new round of fighting that ended in the defeat and death of the uncle. During his ten-year reign, Liu Jun also managed to eliminate several more of his brothers, and in order to keep the surviving princely governors in line he introduced the system of "document clerks" (*dianqian*), assigning relatively low-ranking officials to their staffs to serve as the emperor's spies.[47] But this system could not be effective without a strong hand at the center. The death of Liu Jun in 465 gave rise to yet more internecine violence, the "War of the Uncles and Nephews" that recalled the conflict of the Eight Princes in Western Jin. Local elites were active participants on both sides, and at one point Emperor Ming, the eventual victor, was in firm control of only a single commandery.[48] When Emperor Ming went to join his ancestors in 472 there was, predictably, another flare-up. His last surviving brother, now the governor of Jiang province, rebelled and marched on the capital. The city and the infant emperor were successfully defended by an imperial guard general named Xiao Daocheng. Xiao claimed the southern throne for himself in 479, but only after he had disposed of the Jing provincial governor Shen Youzhi in a bitter campaign on the middle Yangzi in 477–8.[49]

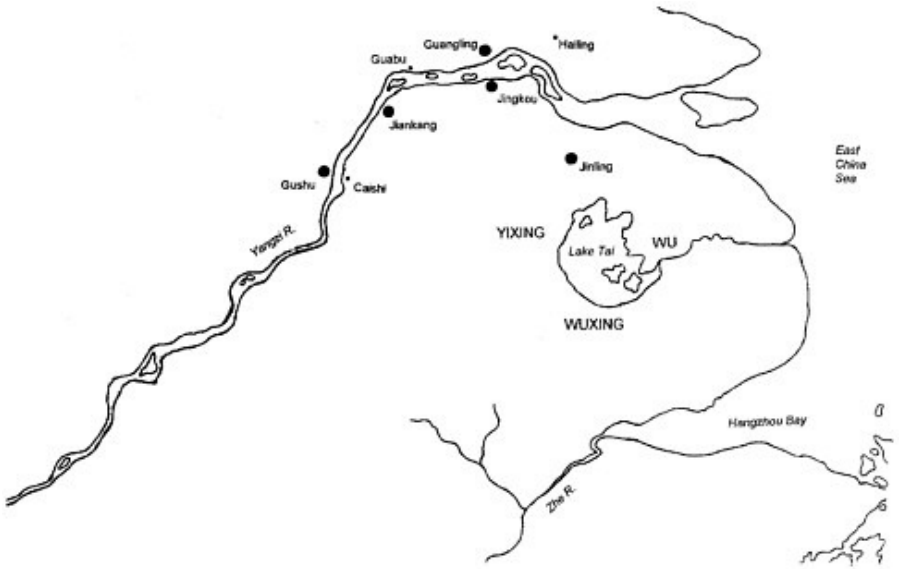
The Qi dynasty founded by Xiao Daocheng was the shortest lived of the southern dynasties, lasting a mere twenty-two years. With regard to domestic peace and tranquility, it did not represent an improvement over its predecessor. Xiao and his successors (he died in 483) followed the Song precedent of appointing imperial princes to

control the major provincial commands while sending "document clerks" to control the princes.[50] The system was ultimately no more effective than it had been in the days of Song. The accession of the weak, suspicious, and inexperienced Xiao Baojuan in 498 touched off a string of plots, counterplots, and executions that soon led to revolts by the regional governors. Among them was an imperial cousin named Xiao Yan who happened to be serving as governor of Yong province with his headquarters at Xiangyang on the Han River.[51] Xiao Yan raised 30,000 infantry and 5000 cavalry in his own territory, and began his revolt against Xiao Baojuan near the end of 500. His campaign was greatly assisted by the complete demoralization of most of the forces that might have opposed him. The Jing provincial forces murdered their commander and defected to his side, the governor of Jiang province submitted without putting up a fight, and the town of Gushu also fell without a fight when the commanding general fled. In the twelfth lunar month of 501, disgruntled subordinates killed Xiao Baojuan and opened the gates of Jiankang to Xiao Yan.[52]

The Liang dynasty established by Xiao Yan in 502 survived for fifty-five years, with the reign of the first emperor (known posthumously as Emperor Wu of Liang) accounting for forty-eight of those years. In spite of the idiosyncracies of Emperor Wu, who "donated" himself to a Buddhist monastery as a slave on three occasions and required his ministers to ransom him at tremendous cost to the state treasury, his reign was probably the longest period of general peace and prosperity in the history of the southern dynasties.[53] This golden age was brought to an end in 548 by the rebellion of Hou Jing, a frontier general who had earlier defected to Liang from the north. Hou took Jiankang and then proclaimed himself emperor in 551, but was unable to impose his rule in the face of intense resistance by southern local elites.[54] After the defeat and death of Hou Jing, the south was pulled together again by a former Liang general named Chen Baxian, who established the Chen dynasty in 557. Chen and his successors would rule a much diminished southern realm (with Sichuan, the Han River valley, and everything north of the Huai River having been lost to the north) until their state met its end at the hands of the north's Sui dynasty in 589.

In addition to the obvious observation that the rise and fall of every one of the southern dynasties was a consequence of military action, several other patterns can be discerned in this history. One is that the internal conflicts of the south almost invariably saw the holders of the lower Yangzi power base around Jiankang arrayed against challengers based at one of the upriver centers – at Jingzhou or Jiangzhou on the Yangzi, or at Xiangyang on the Han River. The Song founder Liu Yu and the Qi founder Xiao Daocheng succeeded in extending their power

upstream from Jiankang; among those who moved downstream, Wang Dun and Huan Xuan both failed in their efforts to control the capital but the Liang founder Xiao Yan was later successful. Each half of the



Map 9 The lower Yangzi region under the southern dynasties

southern empire offered an extensive resource base and a large reservoir of northern émigré soldiery, and neither was able to dominate the other consistently and comfortably. Between them, the Yangzi River provided the great military highway that both facilitated and channeled the operations of all of these contenders for power. Armies and their supply trains travelled by water, and many of the most decisive engagements were fought on water rather than on land. Huan Xuan suffered his fatal defeat in a major river battle, as did the rebel leader Lu Xun in 410.[55]

Another pattern evident in the rise and fall of the several southern dynasties is the movement of military leaders from the lower levels of the official hierarchy to occupy the apex of power in Jiankang. The founders of Song, Qi, and Chen were all non-aristocratic military men from relatively humble origins, and they tended to promote others of their own type to the highest government offices once they wielded supreme power. This was a major change from the Eastern Jin, when members of the most prominent and powerful aristocratic families not only tended to monopolize the top offices at court but also held important provincial commands with control over military forces. Examples of the earlier pattern include Wang Dun and later Huan Wen

and his son Huan Xuan on the middle Yangzi, and the command of the Northern Headquarters troops first by Xie Xuan and later by Wang Gong. At the same time, however, the highest elites of Eastern Jin were not animated by a martial ethos. Generals such as Huan Wen commanded armies on campaign and issued orders to their subordinate officers, but were not accustomed to leading from the front. Huan could impress other aristocrats with his "martial disposition and vigorous air" and his "rugged and flint-like" manner, to be sure, but this was only a matter of speech and deportment; he does not seem ever to have participated in physical combat himself.[56] It should also be noted that the involvement of members of the Huan and Xie families with military leadership was not typical of the aristocracy as a whole, nor did it impress everyone. From the perspective of some of the most literate and cultured men from the "best" families at the Jin court, Huan Wen could be dismissed as a parvenu and a mere military man. In these elite circles what counted was not only distinguished lineage and the holding of high office, but also a family tradition of cultural superiority, and Huan Wen himself made ample obeisance to the last of these ideals with his "displays of benevolent Confucian administration, learning, and conversational ability."[57]

Liu Yu, the founder of the Song dynasty, was a different sort of military leader. Liu was born in 363 to one of the northern émigré families that had settled at Jingkou on the Yangzi. His great-grandfather had migrated south from the area of Pengcheng (today's Xuzhou, in northern Jiangsu), and the fact that he was appointed a county magistrate after he crossed the Yangzi suggests that he had been a member of the local elite and the leader of a group of migrants. Liu Yu's father was no more than a low-ranking official on the staff of a commandery, and the family was described as "poor." Liu Yu began his military career as a low-ranking officer under a general named Sun Wuzhong, and first emerged to prominence when Northern Headquarters general Liu Laozhi invited him to join his campaign against the rebel leader Sun En. During these operations on the eastern coast, Liu Yu distinguished himself as an officer who put himself in the front line and fought alongside his troops. On one occasion he led a patrol of several dozen men to scout the rebels' whereabouts, and suddenly found himself in a desperate fight with a much larger body of the enemy. "Many of the men he led were dead, but his fighting spirit was still keen; he fought vigorously with a glaive (*changdao*) in his hands, and those he killed and wounded were exceedingly numerous."[58]

With Liu Yu's accession to power in the early years of the fifth century, the composition of the ruling elite began to change from

what it had been under Eastern Jin. From this time on, the great majority of top military commands (and provincial posts that included military command) went to men of more humble origins, often men who had made their mark as lower-level military leaders. And it became rare to find aristocrats willing to associate themselves with the armies in any case. When Wang Tanshou of the Langye Wangs joined one of Liu Yu's northern campaigns as a staff officer, Liu saw fit to praise him for his willingness to "bend his ambition to things military."[59] Members of the great aristocratic families continued to hold many of the highest offices at the center, but they were now joined by former military commanders. Real power gravitated to the latter group, who were more dependent upon the emperors for status and position and hence more responsive to the imperial will.[60] Some of these men came from the same class of northern émigrés as Liu Yu, while others were native southerners. Shen Qingzhi, the general who campaigned so effectively against the Man people in the middle years of the fifth century, had almost nothing in common with the old aristocratic elite. He was not an exile from North China, but a native southerner from Wuxing commandery on the south side of Lake Tai. He is supposed to have tilled the land himself, though the fact that he was able to enter the military as a staff aide (*canjun*) – and through the good offices of his brother, who had already served in the same capacity – suggests that he was not from an ordinary peasant family. As a general, Shen was highly critical of the interference of scholars – *shusheng*, in this context perhaps better translated as "bookworms" – in military matters. He himself could neither write characters nor recognize them, and at an imperially-sponsored poetry competition he once had to dictate his entry for another official to write down.[61]

The precedent set by the Song dynasty held true for Qi, Liang, and Chen as well. Xiao Daocheng, the founder of the Qi dynasty, was the son of a Song general descended from northern émigrés who had settled at Jinling on the south bank of the Yangzi. He had some classical education, but became a military officer at an early age. In 442, when he was only fifteen, he was sent with a detached column to attack the Man living near the Han River.[62] The Liang founder, Xiao Yan, had commanded an army in the field, but he arrived at his command because he was a kinsman of the Qi emperors. Chen Baxian came from much more obscure origins. He was the descendant of northern émigrés who had settled at Wuxing, but his father does not seem to have held any office and he began his own career as a minor local sub-official. Thanks to the patronage of a powerful provincial governor from the ruling Xiao family, Chen became first a staff aide and later a troop commander and the administrator of a commandery in the far south. From this base, he eventually went on to found the

Chen dynasty. These men continued to appoint military associates from very humble origins to some of the highest posts in the realm. Wang Jingze, a troop commander under Xiao Daocheng, was the son of a shamaness and began his career as a butcher selling dog meat. He was virtually illiterate, spoke only the southern Wu dialect, and had to have documents read aloud to him by aides. These handicaps did not prevent Wang from rising to the very high office of defender-in-chief (*tai wei*). Indeed, Wang once remarked that he never would have risen to such heights if he had known how to write.[63] The Liang general Chang Yizhi also came from a southern family without official antecedents and was said to be able to recognize no more than ten characters.[64] Senior generals of southern origin such as Shen Qingzhi, Wang Jingze, and Chang Yizhi were fairly rare in the Liang dynasty and earlier when northern émigrés predominated, but became the norm under the Chen dynasty. This change has been attributed to the decadence of the northern elites during the first half of the sixth century, to the devastating impact of the Hou Jing rebellion on the émigré power structure based in the neighborhood of Jian-kang, and to the fact that Chen Baxian found most of his armed supporters among the southern local elites.[65]

The rise of new elites of military origin did not, however, give rise to a strong martial ethos or a more militarized style of governance at Jiankang. On the contrary, there was a tendency for the newcomers at the center of power to be seduced by the cultural values and lifestyles of the highest aristocratic families.[66] This pattern was especially pronounced during the reign of Xiao Yan (Emperor Wu of Liang) in the first half of the sixth century, moving a northern author to denounce the unmanly qualities of the Liang ruling class in the following terms:

> The Liang scholar-officials usually wore loose garments, along with a wide girdle, a grand hat, and high clogs. When they went out they used carriages or sedan chairs; coming back they had the help of servants. In the suburbs and environs of the city nobody was ever seen on horseback. Chou Hung-cheng was loved by Prince Hsüan-cheng, who granted him a small horse, which he often rode. The whole court considered him unrestrained. If a high state minister [*Shang-shu lang*] rode on horseback, he would be impeached. When the rebellion of Hou Ching occurred, people were so flabby and soft that they were unable to walk, and their bodies so lean and breath so short that they could not endure cold and heat. It often happened that such people died suddenly. Wang Fu, a magistrate of Chien-k'ang, who was born so weak and gentle, had never mounted a horse. Whenever he saw a horse neighing and galloping, he trembled with fear. He said to somebody, "Really, it is a tiger; why is it called a horse?" Customs had reached such a level![67]

Military forces always had to be raised and maintained to defend the northern frontier and to protect the ruling house against domestic challenges, and military power remained the ultimate arbiter in the rise and fall of dynasties. In the ideological climate that prevailed in the south, however, the essentially civilian cultural and political ideals inherited from Han times retained their hold over men's minds. This

did not prevent armed coups and rebellions, but once new men had established themselves at the center of power they and their descendants were easily encouraged to adopt the cultivated lifestyles and pattern of civil officeholding characteristic of the preexisting capital elite. The Confucian state provided not only offices and incomes, but also a powerful aura of legitimacy that obviated the need for coercion in many social and political contexts. This may help to explain why the medieval south never gave rise to a knightly class whose identity was based primarily on the use of arms, even though the various southern and émigré elites were often involved in military leadership.[68]

Notes

1 This calculation is based on the population figures for AD 140 given in Fan Ye, *Hou Han shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), chs. 109–13, with the emendations suggested by Bielenstein in "The Census of China during the Period 2–742 A.D.," p. 159. I have taken the Huai River and the Dabie Mountains as the dividing line between north and south; Nanyang and Hanzhong are counted as part of the north, Sichuan as part of the south. Bielenstein's Plate III gives a good sense of the relationship between people and space in the two regions. The calculation of land area is based on the approximate figures for modern Chinese provinces given in *Zuixin shiyong Zhongguo dituce* (Xi'an: Zhongguo ditu chubanshe, 1992).

2 Hamaguchi Shigekuni, *Shin Kan Zui To shi no kenkyuo* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1966), p. 379.

3 Zhou Nianchang, "Dong Jin bei fu bing de jianli ji qi tedian," in *Wei Jin Sui Tang shi lunji*, vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1983), pp. 152–3; Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, p. 330.

4 Dennis Grafflin, "The Great Family in Medieval South China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 41.1 (June 1981), p. 71.

5 Kawakatsu Yoshio, "To Shin shizokusei no kakuritsu katei – gunjiryoku to no kanren no moto ni," *Toho gakuho*, 52 (1980), pp. 317–18.

6 Chen Yinke, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiangyanlu*, pp. 147–9, 155; Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, pp. 318–20, 323–4, 329.

7 Tang Changru, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilun shiyi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), p. 151.

8 Kawakatsu, "To Shin shizokusei no kakuritsu katei," pp. 319–20. Kawakatsu's article also emphasizes the importance of hierarchy-based ideology in securing the acquiescence of southern elites.

9 *Jin shu*, ch. 62, p. 1694.

10 Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, pp. 345–6.

11 Yasuda Jiro, "Shin-So kakumei to Yoshuo (Joyo) no kyomin – gunsei shihai kara minsei shihai e," *Toyoshi kenkyuo*, 42.1 (June 1983), pp. 130–1. Also see William G. Crowell, "Northern Émigrés and the Problems of Census Registration under the Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties," in Albert E. Dien (ed.), *State and Society in Early Medieval China* (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 171–209.

12 Holcombe, *In the Shadow of the Han: Literati Thought and Society at the Beginning of the Southern Dynasties*, p. 27.

13 Chen Yinke, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiangyanlu*, p. 116.

14 Tang Changru, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilun shiyi*, pp. 158–60; Kawakatsu, "To Shin shizokusei no kakuritsu katei," pp. 328–9. The relevant edict is quoted in Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 91, p. 2888, and at greater length in *Jin shu*, ch. 6, p. 154.

15 Fu Lecheng, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao zhanshi," in Zhang Qiyun et al., *Zhongguo zhanshi lunji* (Taipei: Zhongguo wenhua xueyuan chubanbu, 1954; 3rd edition, 1980), pp. 20–1. Also see Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 93, pp. 2927–9.

16 He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, p. 87; Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, pp. 331–2.

17 Kawakatsu, "To Shin shizokusei no kakuritsu katei," pp. 333–6.

18 The general was Mao Qu; see his biography in *Jin shu*, ch. 81, p. 2126.

19 He Ziquan, "Wei Jin Nanchao de bingzhi," *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica*, 16 (1947), p. 262.

20 For the tribal peoples of the south, see He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, pp. 148–51, and Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, pp. 468–75.

21 Shen Yue, *Song shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), ch. 77, p. 1998. Also see Zhu Dawei, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao nongmin zhanzheng de jige wenti," in *Wei Jin Sui Tang shi lunji*, vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1983), pp. 28, 38–9. Zhu estimates that the total number of Man, Liao, and Li at the beginning of Eastern Jin was in the neighborhood of three million.

22 He Ziquan, "Wei Jin Nanchao de bingzhi," pp. 249–50; Hamaguchi, *Shin Kan Zui To shi no kenkyuo*, pp. 348–9.

23 Hamaguchi, *Shin Kan Zui To shi no kenkyuo*, pp. 387, 389, 391–2.

24 Lü Simian, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao shi*, p. 1294; Hamaguchi, *Shin Kan Zui To shi no kenkyuo*, p. 405.

25 Hamaguchi, *Shin Kan Zui To shi no kenkyuo*, pp. 385–6, 409.

26 He Ziquan, "Wei Jin Nanchao de bingzhi," pp. 255, 257–9; Hamaguchi, *Shin Kan Zui To shi no kenkyuo*, pp. 417–21; Tang Changru, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao Sui Tang shi san lun*, p. 187. For the weakness of conscript forces and commanders' concerns about them, see Lü Simian, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao shi*, p. 1296.

27 Tang Changru, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao Sui Tang shi san lun*, p. 186.

28 During the later part of the southern dynasties, there were two types of *buqu*. The earlier type of private armed retainer in a hereditary relationship of dependency upon his master's family continued to be found, but in addition there now appeared the new phenomenon of generals enlisting recruits to serve as *buqu*. This development was entirely legal and occurred with the sanction of the government, which might even grant soldiers to the commanders. In the eyes of the law these new *buqu* were not private dependants but rather government soldiers who were, in effect, on long-term loan to the generals. See Tang Changru, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao shiqi de ke he buqu," in idem, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilun shiyi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), pp. 15–18.

29 Hamaguchi, *Shin Kan Zui To shi no kenkyuo*, p. 406.

30 Hamaguchi, *Shin Kan Zui To shi no kenkyuo*, pp. 395–7, 412.

31 Hamaguchi, *Shin Kan Zui To shi no kenkyuo*, pp. 410–11; Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 2, pp. 380–1; *Zhongguo junshi shi*, vol. 3: *Bingzhi*, pp. 198–9.

32 Zhou Nianchang, "Dong Jin bei fu bing de jianli ji qi tedian," pp. 156–7, 159.

33 Zhou Nianchang, "Dong Jin bei fu bing de jianli ji qi tedian," pp. 164–7.

34 Zhou Nianchang is convinced that the *bei fu bing* had no connection with the system of hereditary military households; see his "Dong Jin bei fu bing de jianli ji qi tedian," pp. 158, 160. Kawakatsu seems to suggest that the *bei fu bing* were recruited from the members of what were already hereditary military households ("To Shin shizokusei no kakuritsu katei," pp. 330–1). Tang Changru is inclined to believe that membership in the force became hereditary, though he admits that no source says this in so many words (*Wei Jin Nanbeichao Sui Tang shi san lun*, pp. 184–5).

35 Zhou Nianchang, "Dong Jin bei fu bing de jianli ji qi tedian," p. 157.

36 Tang Changru, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao Sui Tang shi san lun*, pp. 183–4.

37 Yasuda Jiro, "Shin-So kakumei to Yoshuo (Joyo) no kyomin," pp. 115, 127–8, 130–1.

38 Hamaguchi, *Shin Kan Zui To shi no kenkyuo*, p. 379.

39 Yasuda, "Shin-So kakumei to Yoshuo (Joyo) no kyomin," pp. 111, 127–8; Yoshi-mori Kensuke, "Shin-So kakumei to Konan shakai," *Shirin*, 63.2 (1980), p. 225.

40 *Jin shu*, ch. 84, pp. 2183–4.

41 Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, pp. 359–60.

42 Yoshimori, "Shin-So kakumei to Konan shakai," p. 223; Chen Yinke, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiangyanlu*, pp. 161, 163, 167–8.

43 Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, pp. 362–3.

44 Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, pp. 365–6.

45 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 113, p. 3570.

46 *Zhongguo junshi shi*, vol. 3, p. 185.

47 *Zhongguo junshi shi*, vol. 3, p. 186.

48 Yasuda Jiro, "Shinan O Shi Kun no hanran ni tsuite – Nancho monbatsu kizoku taisei to gozoku dogo," *Toyoshi kenkyuo*, 25.4 (1967), p. 416 and passim.

49 Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, p. 395. Xiao Daocheng's campaign against Shen Youzhi is described in Fu Lecheng, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao zhanshi," pp. 24–5.

50 *Zhongguo junshi shi*, vol. 3, p. 195.

51 For the character of Xiao Baojuan and the collapse of his government, see Xiao Zixian, *Nan Qi shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), ch. 7, especially pp. 98–102, and Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, p. 397.

52 Fu Lecheng, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao zhanshi," p. 26.

53 He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, p. 177.

54 For more on Hou Jing, see Yao Silian, *Liang shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), ch. 56, pp. 833–63, and Benjamin E. Wallacker, "Studies in Medieval Chinese Siegecraft: The Siege of Chien-k'ang, A.D. 548–549," *Journal of Asian History*, 5.1 (1971), pp. 35–54.

55 For the defeat of Lu Xun, see Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 115, pp. 3640–1.

56 Liu I-ch'ing, *Shih-shuo hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World*, trans. by Richard B. Mather (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), p. 305. Another anecdote in this fifth-century collection indicates that one of Huan's younger relatives did charge into the enemy ranks on at least one occasion, with Huan Wen close enough to the front line to be able to direct him to do so (p. 305). An anecdote regarding military leadership as practiced by members of the Xie family can be found on p. 397.

57 Holcombe, *In the Shadow of the Han*, p. 127; also see Grafflin, "The Great Family in Medieval South China," p. 73, and Liu I-ch'ing, *Shih-shuo hsin-yü*, p. 396.

58 *Song shu*, ch. 1, p. 2. The *changdao* was a long, curved blade mounted on a long wooden shaft, resembling the Japanese *naginata* and the European glaive.

59 *Song shu*, ch. 63, p. 1678.

60 Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, pp. 406–7; Zhu Dawei, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi nongmin zhanzheng de shehui houguo," in *Zhongguo nongmin zhanzheng shi luncong*, No. 5 (N.p.: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1987), pp. 9–11.

61 See Shen's biography in *Song shu*, ch. 77, especially pp. 1996, 1998–9, and 2003.

62 Xiao Zixian, *Nan Qi shu*, ch. 1, pp. 1–3.

63 *Nan Qi shu*, ch. 26, pp. 479–81, 484–5; Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, p. 406. The *tai wei* was one of the Three Dukes (*san gong*), the highest advisors to the throne; see Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 399, entry number 4871.

64 Li Yanshou, *Nan shi* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1975), ch. 55, p. 1376.

65 Chen Yinke, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiangyanlu*, pp. 202–6.

66 Chen Yinke, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiangyanlu*, pp. 186–90.

67 Yen Chih-t'ui, *Family Instructions for the Yen Clan (Yen-shih chia-hsün)*, trans. by Teng Ssu-yü; T'oung Pao Monographs, Vol. 4 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), ch. 11, p. 116.

68 Holcombe, *In the Shadow of the Han*, p. 72 and passim. In his study of Xiao Zixun's rebellion of 465, Yasuda emphasizes the desire of the militarized local elites on both sides to

gain access to the highest, most prestigious civil offices in the capital; see "Shinan O Shi Kun no hanran ni tsuite," especially pp. 423–8.

CHAPTER FIVE
From Northern Wei to Northern Zhou

The most fundamental question faced by all of the various conquest regimes established in China by North Asian peoples, from the Xiongnu at the beginning of the fourth century to the Manchus in the middle of the seventeenth century, was that of sinicization. To what extent would the conquerors continue to adhere to their own political, social, and cultural traditions, and to what extent would they adopt Chinese language, dress, and modes of behavior? Would intermarriage be encouraged or discouraged? Would political power be monopolized by the rulers from the steppes, or would it be shared with Han Chinese elites? The recruitment of Han officials and the adoption of Chinese bureaucratic forms and usages certainly made it much easier to govern and extract revenues from the large settled, agricultural population of the North China Plain. At the same time, both the developed literary culture and the luxurious material lifestyle of upper-class Chinese could hold a powerful attraction for men who had been brought up in more impoverished surroundings. Sinicization also had its dangers, however. The conquerors risked losing the toughness and martial prowess that had given them dominion over the Chinese, and they ultimately risked the loss of their separate identity as they merged with the much larger population of Han Chinese.

Like most of the earlier barbarian rulers in North China, the first Northern Wei emperors had adopted some elements of Chinese administration and court ceremonial and had brought some Han Chinese literati into their service.[1] However, for the most part the Tuoba rulers and their Xianbei followers chose to emphasize their separate, North Asian identity. Even after the conquest of most of North China in the middle of the fifth century, they kept their capital at Pingcheng (now Datong, Shanxi), close to the steppe but on the remote northern margin of the Chinese world. Although detribalized and settled on lands around the capital, many of the Xianbei and other northern peoples subject to the Wei rulers continued to speak their ancestral languages and to make their living as herdsmen rather than farmers. The core of the army remained an exclusively North Asian preserve, although Chinese peasants might be called up for major campaigns (often in logistical support roles) or garrison duty (also regarded as akin to corvée labor). After the military subjugation of the north, control was maintained by contingents of Xianbei warriors who occupied the walled cities and lived apart from the Han majority.[2]

Some Tuoba rulers and their Han ministers had promoted cautious moves in the direction of greater sinicization from time to time, but such efforts had tended to give rise to political controversy and even violent reaction from Xianbei elites.[3]

Beginning in 493, the Wei Emperor Xiaowen, the son of a Chinese mother, introduced in rapid succession a series of measures amounting to a radical program of sinicization. These included a ban on the wearing of Xianbei clothes, a ban on the speaking of non-Chinese languages at court by officials under the age of thirty, and the replacement of multisyllable Xianbei surnames with single-syllable equivalents in the Chinese style (for example, the royal surname of Tuoba – or Tabgach in its original Altaic form – was changed to Yuan). Xianbei families were ranked in the same manner as the Han Chinese elites, eligibility for office was conditioned on family rank just as among the Chinese, and intermarriage between Han and Xianbei was officially encouraged.[4] The first and most important of all of the reforms was the transfer of the capital to Luoyang, south of the Yellow River. The initial move was accomplished by subterfuge in 493. Emperor Xiaowen mobilized his army for a great campaign against the south and advanced as far as Luoyang, where his ministers "persuaded" him to halt the expedition – and he seized the opportunity to announce the change of capital. The transfer was made effective over the next decade as walls and palaces were built and populations transferred from Pingcheng and other centers in North China. By 495 some 150,000 Xianbei and other northern warriors had been moved south from Pingcheng to fill the ranks of the imperial guards and were granted farmland in the vicinity of the new capital. The total population of the city soon grew to approximately 600,000. This development took place on a site that could boast little more than the small Jinyong Fortress in 493.[5] The transfer did not come without opposition; there was an unsuccessful rebellion of Xianbei nobles and generals in the north in 496, and Emperor Xiaowen forced his crown prince to commit suicide the following year, apparently because of his opposition to the reforms.[6]

Not all of the Xianbei were moved south to Luoyang. Large numbers were left along the northern frontier and in the vicinity of the old capital to guard the Wei realm against the Rouran, a tribal confederacy that had emerged to dominate the northern steppe around the beginning of the fifth century.[7] To counter the Rouran threat, the Wei rulers had established a dozen major garrisons during the first half of the fifth century. These stretched in an arc along the northern frontier from Dunhuang at the end of the Gansu corridor in the far northwest to Yuyi directly north of modern Beijing. The sector of the line that covered Pingcheng and the Dai region of northern

Shanxi became known as the "Six Garrisons." These were anchored on the west by Woye garrison on the great northward loop of the Yellow River. To the east of Woye lay Huaishuo (north of modern Baotou), Wuchuan (northwest of Hohhot), Fuming, Rouxuan, and Huaihuang. These positions commanded the swath of grassland south of the Gobi Desert, where invaders coming from the north would otherwise have been able to pasture their tired and hungry horses before attacking the settled lands to the south.[8] In addition to the headquarters fortress, each garrison controlled a network of lesser outposts (*shu*) and might also have military authority over surrendered tribal groups occupying the nearby grazing lands.[9] The original function of the garrison fortresses and outposts was not as strongpoints for a static defense, but rather as bases from which offensives could be launched to keep the Rouran off balance. In the late fifth century and especially after the move of the capital to Luoyang, however, there was a marked shift to a more passive defensive posture.[10] This was accompanied by other signs of demoralization among the men of the garrisons.

The garrison communities had been built up over time from heterogeneous sources. The core element consisted of Xianbei and other "compatriots" (*guoren*), to which were added large numbers of nomadic, Turkic-speaking Gaoju people who had been captured in the course of various Wei expeditions into the steppe and several hundred thousand Chinese peasants who had been relocated to grow food for the garrisons. Other sources of manpower were captives taken from the Man people along the southwestern fringe of the Wei empire and convicts sent to the garrisons as punishment for a variety of offenses. Leadership within these communities was provided by Xianbei nobles and the descendants of Chinese local elites who had been transferred to the frontier by the Wei rulers. The Xianbei were the dominant group in cultural and linguistic as well as political-administrative terms, and it was usual for garrison families of Chinese descent to adopt the Xianbei language and culture.[11] During the years when the capital was at nearby Pingcheng, the elite families of the northern garrisons occupied a respected place in the Wei state and their members could be promoted to the highest offices. With the transfer of the capital to Luoyang, however, their status took a turn for the worse.

A yawning chasm opened between the Xianbei who remained on the northern frontier and those who had moved south with the emperor and his court. The northerners continued to adhere to old customs and the ancestral tongue, while their cousins in Luoyang were rapidly adopting Chinese ways. The gap was not only cultural but also political and social. The strength of the now-distant garrisons was of much less concern to the government than in the past. Members of the

capital elite came to regard garrison commands as hardship posts, with the result that only men of inferior quality and character were willing to accept such appointments. Many of the officials sent from the capital were abusive and corrupt, and they found various ways to feather their own nests at the expense of the people who were subject to their authority.[12] At the same time, the possibility of upward mobility for the garrison elites was closed off. Not only were they excluded from the formal ranking system that established the eligibility of the Luoyang Xianbei for government offices, but they now found themselves officially registered and classified as "garrison households" (*fuhu*) – along with all the other members of the garrison communities, the descendants of convicts among them. They and their families had, in effect, been redefined as members of a hereditary servile status group. For men who prided themselves on the fact that their ancestors had come to the garrisons as the "sons of good families" (*liang jia zi*) rather than captives or convicts, this was an extremely bitter blow.[13] Because of their proximity to the center of power, the Xianbei guardsmen resident in and around Luoyang were able to protect their own interests quite effectively. In 519, for example, a mob of guardsmen set fire to the home of a Han Chinese official who had proposed that military men should be barred from the highest civil posts, the so-called "pure offices," and the idea was quickly dropped.[14] Relegated to the distant frontier, the men of the Six Garrisons found redress of their grievances a much more difficult matter.

When the explosion finally came, it was set off not by the garrison elites but by the most marginal elements of the garrison communities. The steppe frontier had been afflicted by drought and famine, and when the commander at Huaihuang refused to distribute relief grain in the summer of 523 he was murdered by the people of the garrison. Soon afterward, a Xiongnu trooper named Poliuhan Baling led a revolt at Gaoque, an outpost of the Woye garrison, and other disaffected elements swiftly flocked to his banner.[15] Poliuhan's followers seem to have come mainly from the Gaoju, Xiongnu, and other subjugated groups who had been allowed to retain their tribal organization and nomadic way of life, and they may have been encouraged by the raiding of the frontier by hungry Rouran and the complete failure of a Wei army sent up from the south to bring the marauders to bay. Secondary revolts spread along the frontier and into the Ordos region within the great loop of the Yellow River, with many of the garrisons dissolving into chaos. In some of the threatened communities, such as Huaishuo and Wuchuan, members of the garrison elite organized their kinsmen, slaves, and retainers into "loyalist" militias to protect their property and status.[16] The rebellions were put down in the first half of

525 by government armies with considerable assistance from the Rouran khan, who had decided to intervene on the side of the Wei court. By this time large numbers of refugees from the garrisons had already migrated southward into Hebei and Shanxi, and the government chose to move some 200,000 surrendered rebels to the plains of central Hebei on the grounds that it would be easier for them to find food there than on the devastated and drought-stricken steppe frontier. This quickly proved to be a serious miscalculation. Before the end of the year some of the displaced northerners had rebelled again, and during the course of 526 and 527 the various rebels and refugees in Hebei coalesced into a very strong force under the leadership of Ge Rong, a former officer of the Huaishuo garrison.[17]

At this juncture, the most effective military force available to the Wei court was the following of the Shanxi warlord Erzhu Rong. The Erzhu clan were a branch of the Jie people, an eastern Iranian group that had entered China as part of the Xiongnu tribal confederacy and later gave rise to the Shi rulers of Later Zhao in the fourth century. As early supporters of the Tuoba, they had been rewarded with a large grant of territory near the Hutuo River in north-central Shanxi, between Pingcheng and Taiyuan. Here they were allowed to retain their tribal organization and pastoral way of life; by the early sixth century they were said to number 8000 families, with cattle, sheep, camels, and horses in such numbers that they were "counted by the valley" rather than individually. Erzhu Rong and his followers emerged as an important loyalist force after the frontier erupted in rebellion in 523, and they offered a haven for many of the people who had fled southward to escape the chaos in the garrisons. These new adherents included quite a few capable military leaders from among the garrison elite, and the Erzhu used their wealth in livestock to expand their forces further by buying the services of fighting men who had fled from the garrisons.[18] During the chaos in the north Erzhu Rong managed to take control of the city of Taiyuan and make it his headquarters, and it soon became clear that in spite of his opposition to the garrison rebels he was anything but a loyal servant of the Wei court at Luoyang. In the fourth lunar month of 528, he took the poisoning of the young Emperor Xiaoming by Empress Dowager Hu as his pretext to march on the capital and assert control over the court. On May 17, Erzhu Rong ordered his troopers to cut down more than a thousand officials and courtiers who had come out of the city to tender their submission; the Empress Dowager and her three-year-old puppet emperor were flung into the Yellow River.[19]

After enthroning a puppet emperor of his own, Erzhu Rong turned east to confront Ge Rong's rebel swarm on the plains of Hebei. Debouching rapidly from the Fukou Pass in the Taihang Mountains with a force of

7000 picked cavalry in the ninth lunar month of 528, Erzhu smashed the much larger rebel army which was spread over the space of a dozen miles north of the city of Ye.[20] This victory resulted in the relocation of thousands of the defeated warriors to Taiyuan to swell the ranks of the Erzhu forces, and it left Erzhu Rong as the strongest power in what remained of the Wei empire. His hegemony was short-lived, however. In the ninth lunar month of 530 the puppet emperor Xiaozhuang eliminated the dictator in a carefully contrived palace ambush, landing the first blow with his own saber. Erzhu Rong's heir Erzhu Zhao responded by sacking the capital, killing Emperor Xiaozhuang, and installing yet another candidate on the Wei throne.[21] In spite of this brutal and decisive action, the new leader of the Erzhu was unable to secure his clan's hegemony. The new emperor and his court remained surprisingly recalcitrant, kinsmen sent to govern outlying regions of the empire tended to disregard Erzhu Zhao's authority, and, most serious of all, the former followers of Ge Rong who had been subordinated to the Erzhu escaped from Shanxi to Hebei and once again challenged the Erzhu hegemony.[22] The leader of this movement was a general named Gao Huan.

Gao's grandfather was a Han Chinese official in the service of Wei who had been sent to the Huaishuo garrison as punishment for an offense. Gao himself grew up in poverty on the frontier, not even owning a horse until he married the daughter of a wealthy Xianbei cattleman. This marriage apparently opened the door to minor office in the garrison, with Gao serving first as a subaltern (*duizhu*) and then as a dispatch courier. After the outbreak of the rebellions in the Six Garrisons in 523, Gao was one of the many frontiersmen who ended up in the plains of Hebei, where he moved from one rebel group to another before defecting from Ge Rong's camp to that of the Erzhu.[23] He was given positions of great responsibility first by Erzhu Rong and then by Erzhu Zhao, who made the fatal mistake of putting him in command of what was left of Ge Rong's host. Gao promptly decamped from Shanxi and began to establish an independant regime in Hebei in 531. Although Gao's own cultural and linguistic identity, thanks to his family's experience in the "melting pot" of the Six Garrisons, was very much that of a Xianbei and his closest associates were fellow frontiersmen from Huaishuo, he nevertheless succeeded in winning support from some of the aristocratic Han families of Hebei.[24] These families had, of course, raised strong militia forces from among their retainers and tenants as was the usual practice in unsettled times. When the showdown between Gao Huan and Erzhu Zhao occurred at the Hanling ridge near Ye in the late spring of 532, Gao commanded a strong army that included both frontier cavalry and Han Chinese elements.[25] The Erzhu forces were decisively defeated, and in the

space of less than a year Gao was able to reduce the Erzhu strongholds in Shanxi, incorporate the defeated troops into his own army, and install a Wei prince of his choosing on the imperial throne in Luoyang. Gao Huan's control of the empire was still far from complete, however. His intended puppet emperor, Xiaowu, soon showed that he had a mind of his own, and, what was worse, he could look to the west for military support. Back in 530 Erzhu Rong had sent an armed expedition to establish control over the Wei River valley and adjacent regions, and by 534 the leaders of that expedition were well on their way to establishing an independant regional regime. The man who emerged as the central figure in this venture was a young general named Yuwen Tai. For the next sixteen years he would be Gao Huan's deadly rival, and his descendants would eventually destroy the state ruled by Gao's heirs.

While Gao Huan was a man of the Huaishuo garrison, Yuwen Tai hailed from the Wuchuan garrison sixty-five miles to the east. He was descended from a Xiongnu group that had adhered to the Wei state in its early days and received "compatriot" status. His great-great-grandfather had gone out to join the Wuchuan garrison in the early years of the fifth century, and his family clearly belonged to the garrison elite. When the rebellions broke out in the Six Garrisons in 523, his father organized a loyalist militia to resist the rebels. Yuwen Tai was perhaps eighteen years old at the time.[26] Like many other refugees from the garrisons, Tai and his father eventually sought shelter with one of the rebel groups in Hebei. After the father was killed in battle Tai adhered to Ge Rong, and after Ge's defeat in 528 he entered the service of the Erzhu. At this point he benefited from the fact that other members of the Wuchuan elite had already found shelter with Erzhu Rong at Taiyuan, where they had acquired a modicum of authority. One such was Heba Yue, the son of an old comrade of Tai's father, who was selected by Erzhu Rong to be the principal troop commander of the expedition to recover the Wei River valley.[27] Heba brought Yuwen Tai along as one of his officers. When Heba was murdered by another general at the beginning of 534, the senior officers of the army elected Yuwen Tai, still not yet thirty years old, to be their new leader. The manner of his elevation may help to explain the relatively informal, collegial style of decisionmaking that seems to have been characteristic of the regime over which he presided. Yuwen Tai was clearly superior to his fellows in political authority and his power grew with the passage of time, but he seems to have dealt with the other generals as social equals and permitted a fair amount of give-and-take.[28] This situation may have been facilitated by the fact that most of Yuwen Tai's close associates were products of the same Xianbei cultural milieu in the frontier garrisons.

At least eight of the twelve generals he commanded in 537 were Xianbei, and six of the twelve were from the Wuchuan garrison.[29]

After he assumed command of Heba Yue's army, Yuwen Tai maneuvered to consolidate his position in the northwest and encouraged the Wei court's defiance of Gao Huan. When the exasperated Gao marched on Luoyang in the summer of 534, Emperor Xiaowu fled westward to take refuge with Yuwen Tai and was installed in the other ancient Han-period capital, Chang'an. Gao responded by placing yet another puppet emperor on the throne, transferring the capital to his own base at Ye in southern Hebei, and forcing the entire population of Luoyang to move there. The former capital quickly turned into the desolate ruins described by a former inhabitant who visited the site thirteen years later:

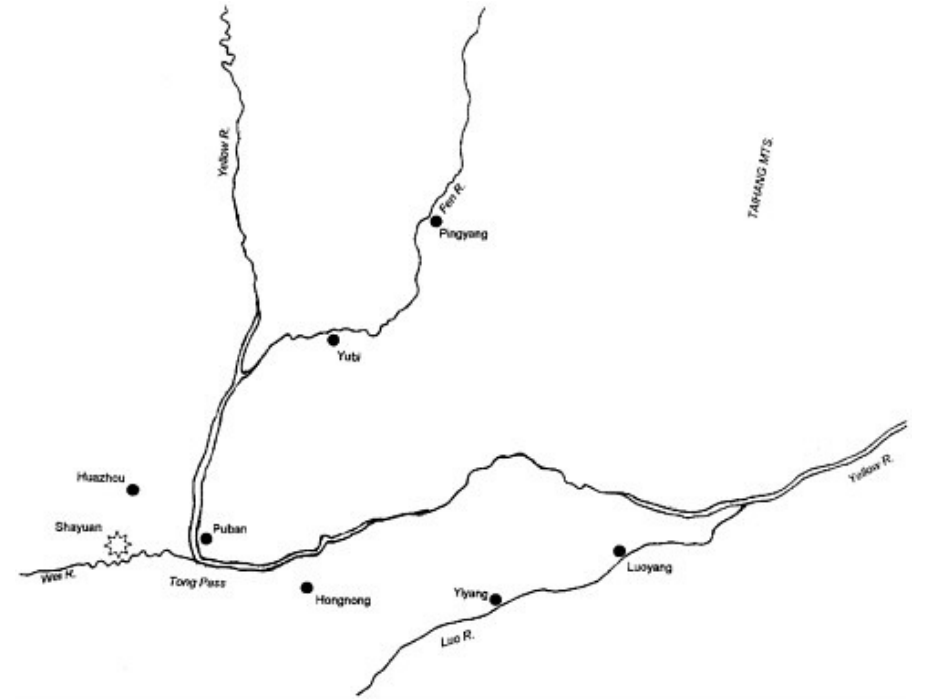
> The city walls had collapsed, palaces and houses were in ruins; Buddhist and Taoist temples were in ashes; and shrines and pagodas were mere heaps of rubble. Walls were covered with artemisia, and streets were full of thorns. The beasts of the field had made their holes in the overgrown palace steps, and the mountain birds had nested in the courtyard trees. Wandering herdsmen loitered in the highways, and farmers had planted millet between the ceremonial towers before the palace.[30]

The flight of Emperor Xiaowu in 534 marked the beginning of the division of North China into two rival states, a division that would hold for more than forty years. Both states were ruled by figurehead emperors of the Wei house until 550, when Gao Huan's heir deposed the last ruler of "Eastern Wei" and made himself the first emperor of the (Northern) Qi dynasty. Seven years later Yuwen Tai's successors did the same, and "Western Wei" became (Northern) Zhou, ruled by the house of Yuwen. From first to last the two states were bitter enemies; the fondest ambition of each was the conquest of the other. In the early days the initiative rested with Gao Huan in the east, who commanded by far the larger resource and population base and by far the greatest number of North Asian fighting men. The western regime was at first hard pressed to survive. Gradually, however, it would develop the institutional and strategic means to turn the tables decisively against the easterners.

Gao Huan made his first large-scale effort to conquer Guanzhong at the beginning of 537. Gao himself led one column and threw three pontoon bridges across the Yellow River at Puban to cross over from Shanxi, while a second column advanced by way of the Tong Pass south of the Yellow River and a third column even farther south moved through the mountain passes from southwestern Henan. This attempt came to naught when Yuwen Tai concentrated 6000 cavalry, his main force, against the Eastern Wei column in the Tong Pass and succeeded in crushing it, prompting Gao Huan to beat a hasty retreat.[31] A second effort came in the autumn, when Gao again advanced on Puban and prepared to cross the Yellow River with an enormous army that was said to number more than 100,000 men.

Gao's approach precipitated the withdrawal of Yuwen Tai's army from an advanced position in western Henan to confront the invaders in Guanzhong. The badly outnumbered defenders, only 7000 strong by one report, deployed at a place called Shayuan on the north bank of the Wei River, where their position backed up against a bend of the river that would have protected the army's flanks and rear.[32] Yuwen Tai took advantage of the tall reeds growing by the riverbank to conceal his flank units. When the Eastern Wei army arrived on the afternoon of November 19, its attack dissolved into a disorderly rush to close with the weak-looking western formation. It charged directly into the trap that Yuwen Tai had set, and was quickly cut in half by a heavy cavalry charge from the right wing of the Western Wei army. Gao Huan's army was routed, and the westerners claimed to have taken 6000 heads and 70,000 prisoners, of whom all but 20,000 were soon allowed to return to the east.[33] The fight was fairly typical of a great many medieval Chinese battles in that it revolved around a cleverly baited trap leading to a devastating ambush. The deployment of the Western Wei troops with their backs to the river illustrates another common motif, as generals would occasionally place their troops in such desperate positions to solidify fighting spirit and eliminate all hope of survival by flight.

The victory at Shayuan all but guaranteed the survival of Yuwen Tai's regime. The easterners would never again penetrate Guanzhong in force, and fence-sitting local elites were encouraged to throw their support to the victors. Among the other spoils of victory, Western Wei was able to establish lasting control over the Hongnong area in western Henan and the southwestern corner of Shanxi, between the Puban ford and the lower course of the Fen River.[34] Probably at the insistence of the emperor and his advisors, Western



Map 10 The zone of confrontation between Western Wei (Northern Zhou) and Eastern Wei (Northern Qi)

Wei forces followed up this victory almost immediately by advancing east to the vicinity of Luoyang.[35] There, however, they were badly defeated by an eastern army at the battle of Heqiao (the Yellow River bridge) on September 13, 538, and driven back to Guanzhong in disarray.[36] The initiative shifted again to Gao Huan, who moved down the Fen River from Taiyuan to attack the fortress of Yubi in the late autumn of 542. Located on the Fen about twenty-five miles above its confluence with the Yellow River, Yubi – the "jade rampart" – had been built by Western Wei in 539 to cement its hold on southwestern Shanxi and block the invasion route into Guanzhong by way of the Puban ford. After a furious assault that went on without interruption for nine days and nights, Gao Huan withdrew because of a snowstorm that claimed the lives of many of his exposed soldiers.[37] In the following year, 543, Yuwen Tai marched east to Luoyang once again, and just as in 538 Gao Huan brought his main army south from Taiyuan to deal with him. The eastern and western armies met in the Mang hills between Luoyang and the Yellow River in the third lunar month, and a series of engagements spread over several days ended in another costly defeat for Yuwen Tai, who again withdrew to the west.[38]

In 546 Gao Huan made another attempt on Yubi. The siege probably

began in the ninth lunar month and lasted for approximately fifty days. In contrast to the stone walls of late Roman and Byzantine cities and fortresses, fortifications in North China during this period were normally built by the *hangtu* or rammed-earth method that had been in use since very early times. A thin layer of earth was spread between wooden frames and pounded until it was hard, more earth was spread on top of that and pounded, and so the wall was built up layer by layer. It was usual for cities to be protected by solid, massive *hangtu* ramparts between ten and thirty feet thick, and the walls were often surrounded by a deep ditch or moat.[39] If the walls were in good repair and the fortress held by a strong garrison with adequate provisions, it could be extremely difficult to capture. In China as in the Mediterranean world and the Latin West during the Middle Ages, the technologies of fortification and siege-craft tended to give the defenders of strongholds a significant edge over their attackers. Sieges could drag on for many months, and fortresses were more likely to fall as a result of starvation rather than assault, sapping, or battery. The attackers sometimes ran out of food before the defenders did.[40]

Gao Huan's siege of Yubi illustrates the difficulties faced by an army trying to take a strong fortress. Gao's men began by building an earthen mound to overlook the south wall of the fortress, but the defenders were able to counter by adding to the height of their towers. The attackers then tried tunnelling, but the defenders intercepted the tunnels by digging a deep trench inside and parallel to the south wall. When the attackers tried to weaken the wall with a sort of battering ram, the defenders lowered a cloth screen from the top of the wall to soften its impact. Gao Huan's men eventually succeeded in undermining the wall and causing a small section to collapse, but the Western Wei defenders quickly filled the gap with a makeshift palisade. After spending thousands of lives to no avail, Gao abandoned the siege and withdrew to Taiyuan. He died only a few weeks later.[41]

After 546, the conflict settled into a low-intensity, decades-long stalemate, with few major initiatives undertaken by either side.[42] With Gao Huan's passing the cast of characters had begun to change, and both regimes now seemed more concerned with internal developments and advances in other directions.[43] Moreover, the ten-year war from 537 to 546 seemed to demonstrate to both sides the futility of offensive operations. Eastern Wei's most promising avenue of advance into Guanzhong, from Taiyuan by way of the Puban ford, was blocked by the adamantine walls of Yubi, while Western Wei's preferred invasion route on the south side of the Yellow River led only to the ruins of an abandoned capital. The new eastern capital of Ye was another 170 miles to the northeast (as the crow flies) and on the other

side of the Yellow River, while it was at Taiyuan in central Shanxi that Gao Huan had established his military headquarters and concentrated the bulk of his North Asian soldiery. Any western army operating in the vicinity of Luoyang was badly exposed to an attack launched from Taiyuan to the north, as happened in 538 and 543.[44]

In their battles in the 530s and 540s, both Gao Huan and Yuwen Tai led armies that were composed mainly of Xianbei, Gaoju Turks, and other North Asian warriors. Although the numbers given in the sources cannot always be trusted, it seems that the Western Wei armies were consistently smaller than those of Gao Huan, who was often credited with forces of 100,000 or more. As a result of his victory over the Erzhu and his dominance of Hebei, Shanxi, and Henan, Gao's following included not only the Six Garrison rebels from Hebei, but also the vast majority of the former Erzhu forces and the Wei imperial guards from Luoyang as well as tribal groups from the northern frontier.[45] Although Gao won the support of powerful Han Chinese families in Hebei and made use of their private militias when he defeated the Erzhu at Hanling in 532, he had little faith in the fighting quality of Chinese soldiers. On the eve of the battle of Hanling, he had said to one of the militia leaders, "The troops under your command are Han. I fear they will be of no assistance. Now what you ought to do is take a thousand or more Xianbei troops and mix them in with the others."[46] In Gao's view, fighting was the responsibility of the Xianbei while the function of the Chinese was to feed and cloth the North Asian warriors. He sought to defuse ethnic tensions within his realm by pointing to the benefits of this division of labor. To the Xianbei he would say, "The Han are your slaves. The men till for you; the women weave for you. They provide you with grain and silk so that you are warm and well-fed. For what reason do you bully them?" Han Chinese were treated to a different speech. "The Xianbei are your retainers [*ke*]. For a single measure of your grain and a single length of your silk they attack the bandits so that you are safe. For what reason do you regard them as a scourge?"[47] Despite Gao's views, the military of Eastern Wei and Northern Qi did not remain the exclusive preserve of North Asians. During the 550s an effort was made to recruit Chinese "braves" (*yongfu*) whose courage, strength, and martial skills were up to Xianbei standards, and some Han peasants were eventually conscripted for military service as an extension of their corvée obligation during the last few years of Northern Qi.[48] The large reservoir of North Asian fighting men, however, meant that from first to last there was very little incentive for the government of Gao Huan and his successors to experiment and innovate, let alone introduce sweeping changes in its military institutions.

For Yuwen Tai, the situation was very different. The original Erzhu expedition that had brought him to Guanzhong was only a thousand strong, with two thousand reinforcements following soon after. To these may be added the several thousand Xianbei guardsmen who accompanied Emperor Xiaowu on his flight to the west, assorted herdsmen and refugees from the Six Garrisons recruited on the edge of the Ordos region, and possibly some of the captives taken at the battle of Shayuan in 537. From these elements, however, must be deducted the heavy losses incurred during the disastrous Luoyang campaigns of 538 and 543. Given the severe shortage of North Asian cavalry and the obvious inferiority to Gao Huan in this regard, Yuwen Tai and his associates had little choice but to recruit Han Chinese and other elements of the ethnically mixed population of Guanzhong to fill out the ranks of their army.[49]

An obvious source of fresh manpower was the private militias that had been raised by members of the local elite in Guanzhong and other regions, such as western Henan and southwestern Shanxi, that were accessible to Yuwen Tai's forces. Local strongmen had organized these militias, which became known as *xiang bing* or "local troops," from among their kinsmen, dependants, and neighbors during the disorder that followed the Six Garrisons rebellion, and the Western Wei regime enjoyed a great deal of success in wooing the leaders with grants of titles and offices.[50] One such leader was Wang Yue, a man of Lantian near Chang'an, who was admired by the people of the district for being "spirited and capable." He was made a county magistrate, and later led more than a thousand men from his community to fight for Yuwen Tai at Luoyang in 538.[51] Another was Pei Xia, a former commandery administrator from a prominent family of southwestern Shanxi, who brought a contingent of "local troops" to fight at Shayuan.[52] Chen Yi, a man of Yiyang in the mountains of western Henan, did not come from a family with an official background, but was known for his spirit of knight-errantry. After Emperor Xiaowu fled to the west, Chen gathered several dozen brave youths to carry out raids against Gao Huan's supporters. He was made county magistrate of Xin'an (near Yiyang), and led local troops to participate in both of the great Luoyang campaigns.[53] In addition to bestowing certain titles indicative of military command authority on the leaders of existing local militias, the Western Wei government apparently made an effort in the late 540s to organize the *xiang bing* into a hierarchical command structure headed by its own appointees. The men chosen to head the local troops in each prefecture (*zhou*) were carefully selected. They were men who not only enjoyed the trust of the Western Wei leaders, but also possessed local prestige sufficient to command the respect and obedience of lower-level militia bosses. One such

appointee was Su Chun, a man from the town of Wugong in Qizhou, west of Chang'an, who was the son of a commandery administrator and the younger brother of one of the most important officials of the Western Wei regime. At the time of his appointment in 548, he had already served as a commandery administrator himself and could claim considerable military experience.[54] Yuwen Tai and his associates, most of whom were newcomers to Guanzhong, could use men such as Su Chun to forge links with lesser members of the local elite and draw them into the state structure.

The local troops provided a very significant addition to the military strength of Western Wei, especially in the perilous early years of the regime, and they were still a part of the military establishment as late as 580, just before Northern Zhou was replaced by Sui.[55] They were not, however, the central military institution of Western Wei and Northern Zhou. That position belonged to the "Twenty-four Armies," which are first mentioned in connection with the western command structure as of the year 550. Just exactly where these armies came from, how they were organized, and how they evolved over time are all matters of intense debate and deep disagreement. Many of the relevant arguments skate on very thin evidence, but the subject is one of great importance since the Twenty-four Armies played the central role in Zhou's conquest of Northern Qi in 576 and were the institutional ancestor of the celebrated system of "territorial soldiery" (*fubing*) that formed the backbone of the Sui and early Tang military.[56]

The Twenty-four Armies were clearly distinguished from the much smaller imperial guard. Their leaders reported not to the emperor, but to the headquarters that Yuwen Tai had set up at Huazhou (modern Dali, Shaanxi, guarding the eastern edge of Guanzhong) in his capacity as chancellor (*cheng-xiang*) of Western Wei.[57] The command structure in 550 was based on multiples of six. At the top were six close associates of Yuwen Tai who were designated as "pillars of the state" (*zhu guo*). Below these most senior commanders were twelve major-generals, each of whom had under his authority two armies (*jun*) commanded by "cavalry major-generals." Making up each of the armies was an indeterminate number of battalions (*tuan*), each of which was led by two "chariot-and-horse major-generals."[58] After 550 the number of "pillars" and major-generals increased considerably, and these most senior posts probably became sinecures unconnected with the actual command of troops. The number of *jun* under the "cavalry generals" held stable, however, and this seems to have become the key level of military command.[59] We do not know how large each of these units was, but there is reason to believe that the entire force consisted of about 50,000 men in 550 and well over 100,000 in the 570s.[60]

Even in 550, this would have been a far larger force than Yuwen Tai's original following of Xianbei cavalry.

Where did all of these new soldiers come from? One school of thought holds that the Twenty-four Armies were built up through the incorporation of local troops, though there is no consensus regarding the mechanism by which this was accomplished or the role that local elites played in the leadership of these forces after they were "regularized." Another view downplays the contribution of the *xiang bing* and points to direct recruitment (or even conscription) of individual farmers by the state as the principal source of new manpower.[61] The evidence for both positions is very limited, and some of the sources are maddeningly ambiguous. Much of the debate has revolved around the interpretation of just a few key passages. One appears in the Zhou annals immediately after the notice of the defeat at the Mang hills near Luoyang in 543: "Subsequently there was a widespread recruitment of locally powerful men [*hao you*] in Guanlong in order to augment the armies."[62] Should this be taken as a reference to individuals, or to local strongmen leading bands of followers?

Another brief snippet, a quote from a lost history of the Wei dynasty preserved in a thirteenth-century encyclopedia, tells us that in 550 "strong and able commoners [*min*] were registered as soldiers of the headquarters [*fu bing*]."[63] The context makes it clear that the "headquarters" in question are those of the chariot-and-horse major-generals commanding the various battalions (*tuan*) under the Twenty-four Armies. This passage would seem to suggest that the Western Wei state was now able to induct individual farmers into the regular army for the first time, but there are still unanswered questions. It is not entirely clear whether these men were conscripts or volunteers, nor do we have any indication of the numbers involved or whether this now became the primary means of military recruitment.

The long-term trend, however, does appear to have been in the direction of incorporating larger numbers of individual commoners into the system without the mediation of local elites. In 574, on the eve of a new offensive against Northern Qi, Emperor Wu of Zhou initiated another great military buildup. Ordinary people (*bai xing*) were recruited to fill the ranks of the regular army, and those who joined were removed from the household registers in their home districts. Since this implied freedom from normal tax and corvée obligations, it was reported – no doubt with some exaggeration – that "after this half the Chinese became soldiers."[64]

There has been disagreement as to whether Chinese recruits who were re-registered as soldiers under the Twenty-four Armies became full-time fighting men who followed their units from garrison to garrison,

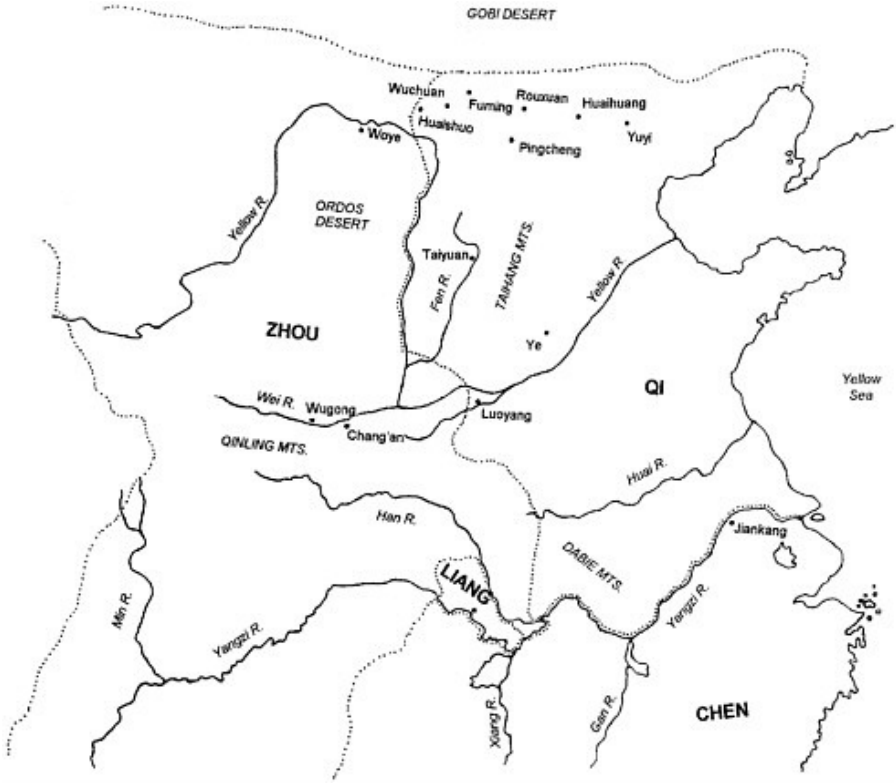
or whether they continued to reside in their home communities and were called up only for rotational guard duty and military campaigns. A passage in the seventh-century *History of the Northern Dynasties* gives the impression that soldiers had no time for farming, since they were supposed to alternate fifteen days on guard duty at the palace with fifteen days off duty learning flag signals and practicing combat.[65] On the other hand, there is also textual evidence to support the farmer-soldier model, and we may reasonably question whether the relatively poor western realm would have been able to dispense entirely with the productive labor of more than 100,000 cultivators.[66] One way to resolve this debate would be to recognize that the sources may well be describing two different systems that existed side by side, one for Chinese peasant recruits and another for Xianbei and other highly professionalized elements within the army. This view is lent credence by the fact that in the early years of the Sui dynasty a clear distinction was made between rural residence units of territorial soldiers (*xiang tuan*) and those based within walled cities (*jun fang*).[67]

In spite of all the disagreement over the early *fubing* system as it existed within the framework of the Twenty-four Armies, there are a few basic points about the military establishment of Western Wei and Northern Zhou that can be asserted with some confidence. The first is that the armies grew dramatically over time, and did so to a considerable extent by incorporating ordinary Chinese farmers. The great majority of the new soldiers were surely infantry rather than cavalry.[68] They (and possibly also their families) were removed from the civilian household registers and re-registered by the military authorities. Theirs was not, however, a base or servile status (as with the military households under the Wei, Jin, and southern dynasties), but an honorable position that carried tangible rewards such as exemption from taxes and corvée. The army was also multiethnic. It continued to include units of Xianbei, and grew not only by incorporating Chinese but also people of many other ethnic groups, such as the Qiang who were especially numerous in some districts of Guanzhong north of the Wei River.[69] Although it is difficult to argue that the army was simply a congeries of private militias that were brought under nominal state authority when their leaders were given official titles, it does seem that local elites continued to play a leadership role at the middle and lower levels.[70] The success of the new military system was due in part to the fact that it exploited rather than challenged the preexisting structure of local society – an observation that is borne out by the fact that the rulers of Western Wei and Northern Zhou were never seriously troubled by grassroots rebellions. At the same time, the system also prevented the concentration of independant and potentially destabilizing military

power in the hands of the most senior commanders. Most of the "pillars" and major generals came from outside Guanzhong, while the great majority of the troops and lower-level officers were locally recruited and had no personal ties to top-echelon leaders. War-lordism was never a problem in Western Wei and Northern Zhou.[71]

An important additional element seems to have been added to the Twenty-four Army system during the final decade of Northern Zhou. For most of the history of the western regime founded by Yuwen Tai, the emperors had little real power and the imperial guard was a relatively small force composed mainly of Xianbei. The dictatorship that Yuwen Tai had exercised in the name of the Yuan (Tuoba) rulers of Western Wei was continued after his death in 556 by his nephew and political heir Yuwen Hu, who inaugurated the Zhou dynasty by installing a son of Yuwen Tai as his puppet emperor. The third kinsman that Yuwen Hu placed on the throne, the shrewd and capable Emperor Wu of Zhou, finally succeeded in eliminating his overbearing cousin in a palace coup in 572. During the years when he had reigned but not ruled, Emperor Wu had taken care to cultivate his connections with the army, making tours of inspection and holding great military reviews. Once he held the reins of power in his own hands, he moved quickly to establish direct imperial control over the Twenty-four Armies. In effect, these forces were incorporated into the imperial guard. In 574 all of their soldiers were given the title of "officer in attendance" (*shiguan*), a term that had previously been reserved for men of high rank and status who served in direct attendance upon the emperor. This measure must surely have added to both the prestige of the soldiers in their home communities and their feelings of loyalty to the sovereign. And it may have been at this time that soldiers of the Twenty-four Armies first began to perform guard duty by rotation in the environs of the imperial palace, an important feature of the *fubing* system under the Sui and Tang dynasties.[72]

Despite – or perhaps because of – his years in the shadow of Yuwen Hu, Emperor Wu proved to be an ambitious and aggressive ruler. Shortly after taking power in his own right, he began to make preparations for a renewal of the war against Northern Qi which had been in a state of suspended animation for several decades (with the exception of a brief flurry of activity in 562–4). In the summer of 575, he mobilized an army of 170,000 men for another



Map 11 North China in AD 572, also showing the old Northern Wei garrisons

offensive eastward to the vicinity of Luoyang. In spite of some initial successes, the 575 effort fared little better than Yuwen Tai's Luoyang campaigns more than thirty years earlier. The Zhou army failed to capture the Jinyong Fortress, the emperor fell ill at a critical moment, and once again – as in 538 and 543 – the main army of the eastern regime came south from Taiyuan to strike the exposed westerners. These circumstances prompted a withdrawal to the safety of Guanzhong after only 18 days of active campaigning.[73] In the autumn of 576, Emperor Wu resolved upon a new strategic approach. Instead of taking the well-trodden path to Luoyang, he would "grasp the throat" of Northern Qi by advancing directly up the valley of the Fen River to attack Taiyuan itself. If a decisive victory could be gained over the enemy's principal army on its home turf, the eastern regime might be expected to unravel of itself. The emperor forced the adoption of this plan over the objections of his generals, who considered it much too risky.[74]

The campaign began on November 10, 576. The first objective was the Qi border fortress of Pingyang, located near the point where the Fen turns westward toward its confluence with the Yellow River. Emperor

Wu invested the fortress with his main army, probably 60,000 strong, while eight smaller contingents totalling 85,000 men (and ranging in strength from 5000 up to 20,000) fanned out in an arc to the north and east to cover the besiegers against a possible relief effort.[75] The emperor directed the siege operations himself, and the town fell in early December through the treachery of one of the Qi commanders. By this time the Qi ruler, Gao Wei, was approaching from Taiyuan with a large army. The Zhou emperor chose to throw a 10,000–man garrison into the town he had just taken and withdraw the rest of his army to the vicinity of Yubi.[76] Now it was Qi's turn to besiege Pingyang. The siege lasted nearly a month, until Emperor Wu returned with the main Zhou army. On the morning of January 10, 577, he deployed 80,000 men in battle formation on a front several miles long and rode along the line with a small retinue to strengthen the morale of his troops. He was prevented from getting at the Qi army, however, by a protective ditch that they had dug south of Pingyang, between Mount Qiao and the Fen River. It was not until mid-afternoon that Gao Wei, persuaded by the eunuchs in his entourage that it was unbecoming for an emperor to take refuge behind a ditch, finally filled in the obstacle and crossed over to join battle. Soon after the fighting began the Qi left wing was pushed back a short distance, prompting the nervous Gao Wei to flee the field. The outcome had been in doubt up to this point, but the flight of the emperor led in short order to the demoralization and collapse of the Qi army. The Zhou forces took more than 10,000 prisoners and broke the siege of Pingyang.[77]

Once again cautious generals tried to persuade Emperor Wu to halt the campaign, but he would have none of it. "Let go of the enemy and troubles will arise. If you gentlemen have doubts, I will go after them alone." The advance elements of the Zhou army reached Taiyuan on January 17, with the emperor following two days later.[78] On the 20th some 40,000 Qi troops came out to offer battle. They were driven back, and Emperor Wu exploited the situation by leading a small force of cavalry through the east gate to create a lodgement within the walls of the city. The fight was not over, however. That night, a determined Qi counterattack eliminated the bridgehead and nearly took the emperor himself – he had to cut his way out of the east gate, and was only able to make good his escape because there were so many corpses on the ground that the Qi troops could not get the gate to shut completely. The next morning, January 21, the Zhou army directed its full strength against the east gate and carried the city, the main center of the Gao family's military power since the early 530s.[79] After this, the rest of the campaign seems anticlimactic. Emperor Wu descended from the Shanxi highlands to the eastern plain by way of the Fukou pass, arriving beneath the walls of Ye, the seat of the civil

administration of Northern Qi, on February 21, 577. The city fell the next day.[80] All that remained were mopping-up operations. The feckless Qi ruler Gao Wei, who had fled from Taiyuan to Ye and from Ye to Shandong, was captured and eventually put to death near the end of the year. Northern Qi had ceased to exist, and for the first time since the revolt of the Six Garrisons a genuinely unified political order was imposed on all the people of North China.

Many factors contributed to the fall of Northern Qi. On a personal level, Gao Wei was clearly outclassed by Emperor Wu of Zhou, who did not flinch from battle and worked assiduously to present himself to his soldiers as a great captain, even dressing in martial attire rather than an emperor's flowing robes when at home in his capital.[81] The Qi leader, in contrast, forgot his lines and started to laugh when he tried to harangue the troops who had been assembled for the defense of Ye, prompting the soldiers to ask one another whether this was a man worth risking their lives for.[82] It was not simply a matter of leadership style but also of political and strategic acumen. After his failure in 575 the Zhou ruler made the shrewd decision to march on Taiyuan rather than Luoyang the following year, while his eastern rival chose to accept battle at Pingyang when it was clearly not in his interest to do so. Emperor Wu had also taken steps to weaken and distract the Qi regime by negotiating an alliance with the southern state of Chen that led to a major Chen offensive against Qi forces in the Huai River valley in 573.[83] The Qi army, meanwhile, was demoralized and disaffected as a result of Gao Wei's unjust execution of the popular North Asian general Hulü Guang in 572; in the opinion of one contemporary observer, this was *the* decisive factor shaping the outcome of the east–west struggle.[84]

There were also deeper, long-term influences at work. One was the new military structure that had been developed by Western Wei and Zhou. The army that conquered Qi was composed of many different contingents, including irregular forces raised by local elites, tribal auxiliaries from the steppe margin of the empire, and even volunteers recruited from among the young gallants of the capital.[85] It is generally agreed, however, that the most important component of the Zhou army, both qualitatively and quantitatively, was the Twenty-four Armies. This force was much larger, better trained, and more reliable than the armies that Yuwen Tai had commanded in the 530s. Another element contributing to the growth of the western armies was the campaign of expansion westward and southward undertaken during the late 540s and 550s, when the war with Qi was largely in abeyance. Western Wei forces subdued the Gansu corridor, a major trade route and an important source of horses, in the late 540s. With the collapse of the Liang dynasty, they moved south to take the

Sichuan basin in 553. The Han River valley, too, was brought under control between 549 and 554, with a scion of the Liang royal house left in possession of a tiny client kingdom around Jiangling on the Yangzi. These conquests opened new sources of grain and manpower that helped to offset the original gross imbalance in favor of the east.[86]

While the western state was getting stronger, the eastern regime did not see any comparable gains. Despite their larger population base, the Eastern Wei and Northern Qi rulers were generally less effective when it came to mobilizing resources for state purposes.[87] One reason for this was the local power of the Chinese great families, especially in Hebei, and this in turn pointed to a fundamental weakness of the Qi polity. In the populous east, the dominant Xianbei were a small minority in a sea of Han Chinese. As the descendants of garrison soldiers who had not looked favorably upon the sinicizing reforms of the Wei Emperor Xiaowen, they sought to preserve their language, customs, and identity (Xianbei was not only the language of command for the army but the primary tongue of the Qi court). They were fearful and suspicious of the Han majority and jealously guarded their hold on political power, with the result that bloody purges of Chinese officials were not infrequent occurrences.[88] Under these circumstances, real cooptation of Chinese elites was out of the question, as was the incorporation of Chinese leaders into the regular military establishment.[89] The hostility of the Xianbei toward the majority population was fully reciprocated, and when the crisis came in the 570s few Chinese were willing to exert themselves on behalf of their alien masters.

A very different development occurred in Guanzhong. There, as we have seen, Yuwen Tai and his relatively small group of Xianbei had little choice but to forge links with the Chinese population in order to survive. This process was probably also facilitated by the more variegated ethnic environment of the western region and by the fact that the leading Han families of the region were much weaker than their counterparts in the east. The leaders of Western Wei and Northern Zhou had less reason to fear that they might be submerged in a sea of Han Chinese.[90] Instead of excluding Chinese from government offices and military commands, Yuwen Tai and his successors sought to draw them in through such devices as the regularization of the local troops (*xiang bing*) and the expansion of the Twenty-four Armies. They continued to use the Xianbei language and were no less proud of their heritage than were their eastern cousins; however, they did not seek to exclude Chinese elites from their circle but to incorporate them and create a sense of common identity. One means by which this was done was the bestowal of multisyllable

Xianbei surnames on Han and Qiang as a way of making them honorary Xianbei; the *xiang bing* leader Su Chun, for example, was granted the surname of Helan. This practice began in the 530s and reached a peak in the 550s.[91] Another trend, not so much a matter of public policy but probably more effective in the long run, was intermarriage between Xianbei, Han, and Qiang families. By the time of the conquest of Northern Qi, a new ruling elite was taking shape in Guanzhong, a hybrid aristocracy that combined Chinese cultural elements with many of the values and customs of the garrison Xianbei. The martial skills and outlook characteristic of Yuwen Tai's original North Asian following were adopted by many members of the Chinese elite, with the result that the new northwestern aristocracy came to be made up of "tough, ruthless men of action, skilled in horsemanship and archery" and "resourceful military leaders, experienced in the politics of their time."[92] Hunting, itself an important form of training for the real business of war, was their favorite pastime. However, they cannot easily be dismissed as mere barbarians. Many of the first generation of Xianbei to occupy Guanzhong, and perhaps even Yuwen Tai himself, were illiterate, but members of the second generation were better educated and much more likely to have at least a rudimentary knowledge of the Confucian classics.[93] It came to be the ideal for a gentleman to be skilled in both the martial and literary arts, so that he was equally capable of serving as either a general or a minister. Out of this new northwestern aristocracy came the first emperor of the Sui dynasty, who completed the reunification of China that had been begun by Emperor Wu of Zhou, and the founders of the Tang dynasty, who created an imperial order that would endure for almost three hundred years.

Notes

1 Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 1, pp. 145–6.

2 Tang Changru, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao Sui Tang shi san lun*, pp. 192–3, 195–6.

3 Rogers, *The Chronicle of Fu Chien*, p. 14; Chen Yinke, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiangyanlu*, pp. 251–2.

4 W. J. F. Jenner, *Memories of Loyang: Yang Hsüan-chih and the Lost Capital (493–534)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 58; He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, pp. 164–5.

5 The Jinyong Fortress was a rectangle 1086 meters north to south and 255 meters east to west; see *Zhongguo junshi shi*, vol. 6: *Bing lei* (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1991), p. 141.

6 Jenner, *Memories of Loyang*, pp. 42, 61–2, 104, 117–18.

7 Very little is known about the Rouran, who are sometimes equated with the Avars of early medieval Europe; see Denis Sinor (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 291–7.

8 Jenner, *Memories of Loyang*, pp. 81–2; for the location of the Six Garrisons, see Scott A. Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1987), p. 59, and Tan Qixiang, *Zhongguo lishi dituji* (Shanghai: Cartographic Publishing House, 1982), vol. 4, maps 50 to 55.

9 For the administration of the garrisons, see Zhou Yiliang, "Bei Wei zhen shu zhidu kao ji xu kao," in idem, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi lunji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963), pp. 199–219; and Mao Han-kuang, "Bei Wei Dong Wei Bei Qi zhi hexin jituan yu hexin qu," pp. 39, 54, 71.

10 Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 65–7; Mao Han-kuang, "Bei Wei Dong Wei Bei Qi zhi hexin jituan yu hexin qu," p. 66.

11 For a thorough discussion of the ethnic and social composition of the garrisons, see Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 70–82.

12 Mao Han-kuang, "Bei Wei Dong Wei Bei Qi zhi hexin jituan yu hexin qu," pp. 71–2; Jenner, *Memories of Loyang*, pp. 69, 82.

13 Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 155–71.

14 Jenner, *Memories of Loyang*, pp. 74–5.

15 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 149, pp. 4674–5.

16 Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 98, 183–91.

17 Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 192–9.

18 For the Erzhu, see Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 114, 123,

201–2, 206; Jenner, *Memories of Loyang*, pp. 86–9; and Wei Shou, *Wei shu*, ch. 74, p. 1644.

19 Jenner, *Memories of Loyang*, pp. 89–91.

20 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 152, pp. 4751–2; *Wei shu*, ch. 74, pp. 1649–50; Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," p. 208.

21 See Jenner, *Memories of Loyang*, pp. 95–7, 160–1; and Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 154, p. 4783.

22 Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 212–15; Jenner, *Memories of Loyang*, pp. 97–8.

23 For Gao Huan's background and early career, see Li Baiyao, *Bei Qi shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), ch. 1, pp. 1–3; He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, p. 186; and Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 83–4, 119–20.

24 Mao Han-kuang, "Bei Wei Dong Wei Bei Qi zhi hexin jituan yu hexin qu," pp. 89–90; Zhou Yiliang, "Beichao de minzu wenti yu minzu zhengce," in idem, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi lunji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963), pp. 125, 128–9; Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," p. 64.

25 For a description of the battle, see Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 155, pp. 4818–20.

26 The most important source for Yuwen Tai's ancestry and early life is Linghu Defen, *Zhou shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1971), ch. 1, pp. 1–3. Also see He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, p. 186, and Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 2–33. Note that there is conflicting evidence regarding Yuwen Tai's age; I have chosen to follow *Zhou shu*, ch. 2, p. 37, which indicates that he died at the age of fifty-two *sui* in 556. This would mean that he was born in 505.

27 For the relationship between Yuwen and Heba, see Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 98–9, 101–3, 107.

28 The collegiality of Yuwen Tai's "junta" – and its limits – is discussed in Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 394–403.

29 Albert E. Dien, "The Role of the Military in the Western Wei/Northern Chou State," in Albert E. Dien (ed.), *State and Society in Early Medieval China* (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 346. For an extremely detailed analysis of the origins and possible factional affiliations of Yuwen Tai's associates, see Mao Han-kuang, "Xi Wei fubing shi lun," in idem, *Zhongguo zhonggu zhengzhi shi lun* (Taipei: Lianjing, 1990), pp. 169–94.

30 Yang Xuanzhi's "Luoyang qielan ji," translated by Jenner in *Memories of Loyang*, p. 142. Jenner also describes the events leading to the abandonment of Luoyang on pages 99–102.

31 *Zhou shu*, ch. 2, p. 22; Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 301–2; Zhao Wenrun, "Lun Xi Wei yu Dong Wei zhijian de ji ci zhanyi," *Bei chao yanjiu*, 1996, No. 2, pp. 11–12.

32 The figure of 7000 is from Wang Yinglin, *Yu hai* (rpt. of 1337 edn; Taipei: Huawen shuju, 1964), ch. 138, p. 18b, quoting Li Fan's *Ye hou jia zhuan*.

33 *Zhou shu*, ch. 2, pp. 23–4; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 157, pp. 4884–6; Pearce, "The

Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 306–7; Zhao Wenrun, "Lun Xi Wei yu Dong Wei zhijian de ji ci zhanyi," pp. 12–13.

34 For the establishment of the Western Wei position in Shanxi, see Mao Han-kuang, "Beichao Dong Xi zhengquan zhi Hedong zhengduo zhan," in *Zhongguo zhonggu zhengzhi shi lun* (Taipei: Lianjing, 1990), pp. 137, 165, and passim.

35 Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 309–12. This was not Emperor Xiaowu, but another Wei prince, known posthumously as Emperor Wen, who came to the throne after Xiaowu died (probably poisoned by Yuwen Tai) at the end of 534.

36 *Zhou shu*, ch. 2, pp. 25–6; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 158, pp. 4894–6.

37 *Zhou shu*, ch. 18, p. 295; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 158, p. 4912; Zhao Wenrun, "Lun Xi Wei yu Dong Wei zhijian de ji ci zhanyi," pp. 16–17.

38 *Bei Qi shu*, ch. 2, pp. 21–2; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 158, pp. 4914–17; Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," p. 316; Zhao Wenrun, "Lun Xi Wei yu Dong Wei zhijian de ji ci zhanyi," p. 17.

39 Otagi Hajime, "Todai shuo ken jokaku no kibo to kozo," in *Di yi jie guoji Tangdai xueshu huiyi lunwenji* (Taipei: Zhonghua minguo Tangdai xuezhe lianyihui, 1989), pp. 648–82. For general background on fortification and siegecraft in China, see Joseph Needham and Robin D. S. Yates, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 5, pt. 6: *Military Technology: Missiles and Sieges* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 241–485, and *Zhongguo junshi shi*, vol. 6: *Bing lei*.

40 For medieval Western sieges, see John Beeler, *Warfare in Feudal Europe, 730–1200* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1971), pp. 44–5, 57; J. F. Verbruggen, *The Art of Warfare in Western Europe during the Middle Ages*, trans. by Sumner Willard and S. C. M. Southern (Amsterdam and New York: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1977), pp. 285, 289; and Haldon, *Warfare, State, and Society in the Byzantine World, 565–1204*, pp. 183–5.

41 Wallacker, "Studies in Medieval Chinese Siegecraft: The Siege of Yü-pi, A.D. 546," pp. 789–802.

42 The major exception was Yuwen Hu's advance to Luoyang in 564, which was no more successful than the efforts in 538 and 543. See Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 169, pp. 5246–8.

43 Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," p. 318 and passim.

44 Mao Han-kuang, "Beichao Dong Xi zhengquan zhi Hedong zhengduo zhan," p. 162. In Tang times, the "official" road distance from Luoyang to Ye was 606 *li*, approximately 200 miles; Liu Xu et al., *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 39, p. 1492.

45 Hamaguchi Shigekuni, *Shin Kan Zui To shi no kenkyuo*, pp. 149, 162–6, 224–5.

46 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 155, p. 4819.

47 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 157, p. 4882.

48 He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, pp. 198–9; Tang Changru, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao Sui Tang shi san lun*, p. 199.

49 Hamaguchi, *Shin Kan Zui To shi no kenkyuo*, pp. 225–9; also see Dien, "The Role of the Military in the Western Wei/Northern Chou State," pp. 337–45.

50 Kikuchi Hideo, "Hokucho gunsei ni okeru iwayuru kyohei ni tsuite," in *Shigematsu sensei koki kinen Kyuoshuo Daigaku toyoshi ronso* (Fukuoka: Kyushu University, 1957), pp. 121–2, 125. Also see the treatment of *xiang bing* in Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 543–61.

51 *Zhou shu*, ch. 33, pp. 578–9.

52 *Zhou shu*, ch. 35, p. 618.

53 *Zhou shu*, ch. 43, pp. 777–8.

54 *Zhou shu*, ch. 23, pp. 395–6; for another example, see the biography of Guo Yan in the same work, ch. 37, p. 666.

55 Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, p. 323.

56 This literature is conveniently summarized by Kegasawa Yasunori, "Zenki fuheisei kenkyuo josetsu – sono seika to ronten o megutte," *Hoseishi kenkyuo*, 42 (1992), pp. 123–51.

57 Hamaguchi, *Shin Kan Zui To shi no kenkyuo*, p. 235.

58 For more on the Twenty-four Army structure, see Li Yanshou, *Bei shi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), ch. 60, pp. 2153–5; *Zhou shu*, ch. 16, pp. 272–3; Dien, "The Role of the Military in the Western Wei/Northern Chou State," pp. 352–5; Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 382–4; and Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, pp. 43–4 and 73, n. 59.

59 Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 388–9, 425, 664; Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, p. 54.

60 Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, p. 61; Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 2, pp. 614, 619; Wang Yinglin, *Yu hai*, ch. 138, p. 18b.

61 For more on these debates, see Kegasawa, "Zenki fuheisei kenkyuo josetsu – sono seika to ronten o megutte," pp. 144–5; and Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 599–611.

62 *Zhou shu*, ch. 2, p. 28. The translation follows Pearce's ("The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," p. 543) with slight modification.

63 Wang Yinglin, *Yu hai*, ch. 137, p. 1a. Pearce discusses this source in "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 597, 736–46.

64 Wei Zheng et al., *Sui shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), ch. 24, p. 680; Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, pp. 56–7.

65 *Bei shi*, ch. 60, p. 2155; translated by Dien in "The Role of the Military in the Western Wei/Northern Chou State," p. 354. It is worth noting, however, that this passage can also be interpreted as describing rotational service by part-time soldiers who will return home after the second fifteen-day period. See Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, p. 65.

66 Unfortunately the key textual evidence is in a surviving fragment of Li Mi's *Ye hou jia zhuan*, considered to be an unreliable source. See Wang Yinglin, *Yu hai*, ch. 138, p. 19a, and Albert E. Dien, "The Use of the *Yeh-hou chia-chuan* as a Historical Source," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 34 (1974), pp. 221–47.

67 *Sui shu*, ch. 28, p. 778. One such multisystemic explanation of apparent contradictions in the materials on the early *fubing* is offered by Zhang Guogang, "Tangdai fubing yuanyuan yu fanyi," *Lishi yanjiu*, 1989, No. 6, pp. 150–1. Also see Tang Changru, "Wei Zhou fubing zhidu bianyi," in idem, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi luncong* (Beijing: Sanlian, 1955), pp. 277–9; and Mao Han-kuang, "Xi Wei fubing shi lun," pp. 263–4.

68 Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," p. 654.

69 Mao Han-kuang, "Xi Wei fubing shi lun," pp. 212–13.

70 Mao Han-kuang, "Xi Wei fubing shi lun," pp. 258–9.

71 This point is developed in Dien, "The Role of the Military in the Western Wei/ Northern Chou State," p. 332 and passim.

72 *Zhou shu*, ch. 5, p. 86; Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, p. 65; Tanigawa Michio, "Fuheisei kokka ron," *Ryuokoku daigaku ronshuo*, 443 (December 1993), p. 20; Kikuchi Hideo, "To setsushofu no bunpu mondai ni kansuru ichi kaishaku," *Toyoshi kenkyuo*, 27 (1968), pp. 138–9.

73 *Zhou shu*, ch. 6, p. 93; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 172, p. 5346.

74 *Zhou shu*, ch. 6, p. 94; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 172, pp. 5352–3.

75 *Zhou shu*, ch. 6, pp. 95–6. The main Zhou army in the 575 campaign had numbered 60,000, organized in six divisions just as in 576.

76 It is not clear why the Zhou ruler chose to pull back. Perhaps he wanted the Qi army to exhaust itself attacking Pingyang. The byzantine politics of the Zhou court may also have been a factor, since Emperor Wu paid a flying visit to Chang'an after his withdrawal from Pingyang. See Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 708–10.

77 *Zhou shu*, ch. 6, pp. 94–7; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 172, pp. 5357–9.

78 *Zhou shu*, ch. 6, p. 97; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 172, p. 5363.

79 *Zhou shu*, ch. 6, p. 98; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 172, pp. 5363–4.

80 *Zhou shu*, ch. 6, p. 100; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 173, p. 5369.

81 *Zhou shu*, ch. 5, p. 83.

82 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 172, p. 5366; Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," p. 712.

83 Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 704–5; for an account of the Chen offensive, see Fu Lecheng, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao zhanshi," p. 35.

84 Yen Chih-t'ui, *Family Instructions for the Yen Clan*, p. 50; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 171, p. 5308; Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," p. 705.

85 See Arthur F. Wright, "The Sui Dynasty," in Denis Twitchett (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 3: *Sui and T'ang China, 589–906, Pt. 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 99–100; Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 571–2; *Zhou shu*, ch. 5, p. 86; *Sui shu*, ch. 56, p. 1389.

86 Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 318–28.

87 He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, p. 195.

88 See Qi Zebang, "Lun Dong Wei-Bei Qi de daotui," in *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi yanjiu* (Chengdu: Sichuan sheng shehui kexue yuan chubanshe, 1986), pp. 383–403.

89 Mao Han-kuang, "Xi Wei fubing shi lun," pp. 259–60.

90 Zhou Yiliang, "Beichao de minzu wenti yu minzu zhengce," p. 176.

91 Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 411–12 and, for the use of the Xianbei language, pp. 443–4. Albert E. Dien provides a more detailed examination of the surname question in "The Bestowal of Surnames under the Western Wei–Northern Chou: A Case of Counter-Acculturation," *T'oung Pao*, 63 (1977), pp. 137–77. For Su Chun, see *Zhou shu*, ch. 23, p. 395.

92 Arthur F. Wright, *The Sui Dynasty* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), pp. 94–5. Also see Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 427–30, 447–8, 451–3, and passim.

93 Pearce, "The Yü-wen Regime in Sixth-Century China," pp. 444–7.

CHAPTER SIX
North versus south

The Northern Zhou dynasty survived for only four years after Emperor Wu's triumph over Northern Qi. It was not brought down by any revolt in the newly conquered eastern plain, nor was any failure of policy to blame. Instead, the house of Yuwen fell victim to the grim actuarial odds facing all human beings – even the best fed, clothed, and sheltered of them – in the sixth century, and to the bad luck that brought a young child to the throne when a very capable adult was needed to maintain control over powerful and ambitious ministers. Emperor Wu, Yuwen Yong, died in the sixth lunar month of 578 as he was preparing to lead a punitive expedition against the Turks, who had replaced the Rouran as the dominant power on the northern steppe. He was not yet thirty-six years old. His heir was a violent and unstable teenager who himself died of a sudden illness in the fifth month of 580. The throne then went to a six-year-old child, and real power fell into the hands of the late emperor's father-in-law, a senior official named Yang Jian who was the son of one of Yuwen Tai's generals. After liquidating much of the Yuwen clan and defeating an armed challenge from Zhou loyalists based in Hebei, Yang inaugurated the Sui dynasty, with himself as the first emperor (known posthumously as Emperor Wen), on March 4, 581.[1] Even as he moved to consolidate his power in the north, he also began to take steps to prepare for the conquest of the Chen state in the south. In 585 he dispatched one of his closest associates, an especially ruthless general named Yang Su, to Sichuan to begin building a great fleet that would sweep down the Yangzi to overwhelm the southern heartland.[2]

With this move, Yang Jian was following in the footsteps of the Jin dynasty, which had conquered the southern kingdom of Wu in 279–80. The Jin emperor had ordered his governor in Sichuan, Wang Jun, to begin building a river fleet in 272. That fleet, led by Wang himself, descended the Yangzi in the eleventh lunar month of 279, overwhelmed the Wu fortresses along the river, and joined land forces that had marched down from the north to capture Wuchang. From there Wang raced down the Yangzi to take the Wu capital of Jianye (which would be known as Jiankang under the southern dynasties), slipping in ahead of a more cautious overland column that had reached the north bank of the river. The Jin victory owed much to the fact that Wang Jun's fleet was more powerful than the southern water forces.[3] And it clearly provided the model for the Sui campaign

against Chen. No other northern attack on the south in the intervening years had involved the descent of a strong waterborne force from Sichuan, and no other northern offensive had succeeded in taking the southern capital. For most of the period from the founding of Eastern Jin to the reunification of the north in 577, a rough military balance had prevailed between north and south. During periods of division and weakness in the north, southern armies were sometimes able to press as far as the Yellow River and even into Guanzhong, while the stronger and more unified of the northern regimes were able to occupy Sichuan and push all the way down to the north bank of the Yangzi. Neither side, however, had ever succeeded in making serious inroads into the core territories of the other. The reasons for this prolonged stalemate are worth exploring in some detail since they reveal much about the military techniques of the age and the ways in which military operations might be constrained by technology, resources, and political priorities. Let us begin with the south's campaigns to drive out the "barbarians" and recover the ancient heartland of Chinese civilization.

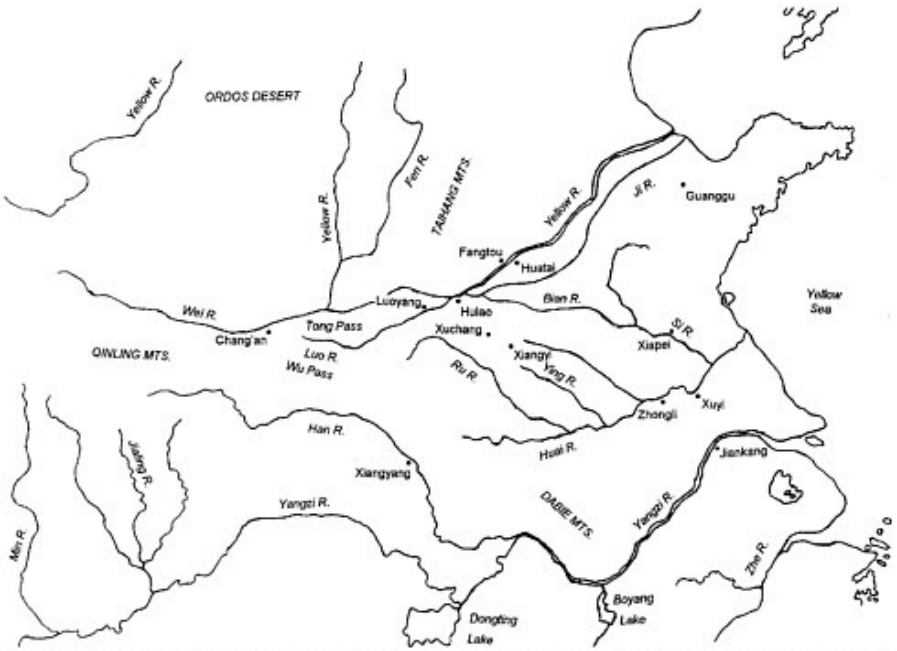
In the early years of the Jiankang regime, many of the émigré leaders showed a strong interest in reconquering the north. In 313, four years before the formal establishment of Eastern Jin, one of those leaders, Zu Ti, moved north with a small force consisting of a couple of hundred retainers and another 2000 volunteers he had recruited himself. The government, led by the future Emperor Yuan, provided so little support that Zu's men even found it necessary to forge their own weapons, yet after seven years of campaigning Zu had recovered all of Henan for Jin and was poised to cross to the north side of the Yellow River. The offensive came to an abrupt end when Zu died in 321 (disheartened, it was said, by his knowledge of the tensions within the Jin leadership group that would shortly give rise to Wang Dun's rebellion), and the territory that had been recovered was soon lost again.[4] A grandiose scheme proposed by another émigré leader in the 330s also failed to yield concrete results, and in 353 a major expedition led by a militarily inexperienced scholar resulted in disaster when the Jin army was betrayed by its Qiang allies.[5] The latter campaign was undertaken to exploit the chaos in North China following the collapse of the Zhao regime of Shi Le and Shi Hu, and conditions were propitious enough that a second expedition was launched in 354. The prime mover in this effort was Huan Wen, the powerful governor of the middle Yangzi region. Huan took his fleet up the Han River, then advanced overland through the Wu Pass and into the Wei River valley. There he was confronted by the forces led by the Fu clan of the Di people, who were then in the process of establishing the Former Qin regime. Huan fought two battles with the Qin forces,

winning the first and losing the second, but his offensive was brought to an end by logistical difficulties rather than defeat on the battlefield. Huan had timed his entry into Guanzhong for late spring in the expectation that he would be able to feed his army, originally 40,000 strong, from the harvest of the local winter wheat crop, and his calculations were completely upset by Qin's decision to pursue a scorched-earth strategy and burn the standing crops in the fields. The hungry Jin army beat a hasty retreat in the sixth lunar month of 354, losing some 10,000 men to Qin pursuers.[6]

In 369 Huan Wen, now the dominant figure at the Jin court, made another attempt to recover the north. This time he began his advance from the eastern end of the frontier in the fourth lunar month, moving northwestward across the Henan plain by way of tributaries of the Huai River so that his army of 50,000 men could be supplied by water – although this required a great deal of engineering work due to dry weather and low water levels. Disregarding advice to establish a base in the north, accumulate supplies, and continue the campaign the following year, Huan crossed the Yellow River and confronted the army of the Murong Xianbei state of Former Yan at Fangtou. After suffering several reverses at the hands of the Yan forces, Huan learned that a Former Qin army was coming to aid Yan and that his own army's food supplies were about to give out (Yan raiders having cut the Jin supply line in Henan). He burned his boats and retreated southward by land, but was overtaken by pursuing Yan cavalry at Xiangyi, where his army was smashed in a battle that reportedly cost Jin some 30,000 men.[7]

The next major "northern expedition" came in 409, when Liu Yu, the new strongman of the Eastern Jin court after his victory over Huan Xuan, launched a large-scale invasion of the Murong state of Southern Yan in what is now Shandong province. Liu began his advance by water in the late spring, moving up the Si River from the Huai, but at Xiapei he left his boats and baggage train behind and took his army directly northward across the mountainous base of the Shandong peninsula. The Murong king failed to send troops to block the mountain passes, but stationed a large army at Linqu, a day's march to the south of his capital (Guanggu, today's Yidu). This force was met and defeated by the Jin army, which moved on to besiege Guanggu, capturing it and eliminating the Southern Yan state in the spring of 410. Liu Yu's success owed much to the fact that he was able to feed his army with grain harvested in the territory of the Southern Yan, whose leaders had not taken the trouble to "clear the fields" as the Former Qin had done in Guanzhong in 354.[8] After an intermission caused by internal struggles in the south, Liu Yu directed his attention to the Wei River valley, where the Qiang state of Later Qin held sway,

in 416. The Jin armies began their advance in the eighth lunar month by several different routes. In the west, a land force moved directly on Guanzhong by way of the Wu Pass. In the center, another overland column marched through Xuchang to Luoyang, while in the east the largest of the Jin forces were moved by boat along the Bian and Si rivers and then to Luoyang by way of the Yellow River. After Luoyang was taken in the tenth lunar month several columns joined forces to advance up the Yellow River to force the Tong Pass, and from there they continued up the Wei River to Chang'an, still accompanied by the Jin



Map 12 The zone of confrontation between north and south, ca. AD 400

river fleet. The Qin army was defeated in a battle at the Wei River bridge north of Chang'an in the seventh lunar month of 417, leading to the surrender of the Qin ruler. The southern presence in Guanzhong could not be sustained, however. Liu Yu returned to the south in the eleventh month after the sudden death of the trusted lieutenant he had assigned to keep an eye on the court at Jiankang. The small garrison that he left behind, only about 10,000 men, suffered from divided command and was easily smashed by a Xiongnu warlord pressing south from the Ordos region in 418.[9]

When southern forces came north again, this time dispatched by Liu Yu's son, Emperor Wen of the Song dynasty, their goal was to recover

territory on the south side of the Yellow River that had recently been lost to the rising power of the Tuoba Wei. In 430 some 100,000 Song troops came north in several columns, again including a water force that entered the Yellow River from the river system of Henan. The Wei forces initially withdrew to the north bank of the river, but in the tenth lunar month they counterattacked, retaking Luoyang and several other strategic points and laying siege to Huatai on the south bank (near today's Jixian, Shandong). Early in 431 a Song relief column was forced to withdraw because of supply problems, and the 10,000-man garrison of Huatai soon capitulated.[10] Emperor Wen made a second attempt to recover northern Henan in 450. Operations began in the seventh month, and Song forces quickly laid siege to Huatai and occupied other positions on the south side of the Yellow River. The Wei ruler, Emperor Taiwu, had already been planning an offensive of his own when Song attacked. He waited until the ninth month to march to relieve his garrison at Huatai, then caught and crushed the besieging army as it was retreating. News of the defeat at Huatai prompted the Song emperor to order another column that had almost taken the Tong Pass to fall back to Xiangyang on the Han River.[11] The Wei offensive that followed reached all the way to the Yangzi, and is sometimes identified as the key turning point when the balance of power shifted decisively in favor of the north.[12]

Southern armies marched north again in the days of Liang and Chen, but they had little to show for their efforts. A Liang campaign in 505 went no farther north than the Huai River. Later, in 528, a Liang army was able to take advantage of the chaos in the Wei realm after the Six Garrisons revolt to march north and occupy Luoyang, but it was very soon expelled from the city by the veteran warriors of the Erzhu clan.[13] The gains from the very last southern offensive, Chen's recovery of the land between the Huai River and the Yangzi from Northern Qi in 573, were quickly lost to Northern Zhou. When Sui aimed its knock-out blow at Chen in 588, an offensive could be launched from the north bank of the Yangzi just a few miles from the southern capital.

There were many reasons for the south's failure to recover all of the lost territories, or even to make lasting conquests in the north. Most obvious was the tactical asymmetry of northern and southern armies during the period of division. The northern regimes, most of which had access to either the pasture lands of northwestern China or the steppe itself and were led by peoples of steppe origin, had little difficulty raising large forces of highly skilled horsemen and mounted archers. With little pasture and relatively few horses, southern armies were made up mainly of infantry with only a very small cavalry component.[14] On the battlefield, southern armies lacked both mobility

and offensive shock power. When they were victorious they lacked the means for a rapid pursuit of mounted foes, and when they were defeated by such a mobile opponent they had no hope of escape. Southern armies were driven to adopt various expedients to compensate for their weakness in cavalry. One, employed with considerable success by Liu Yu during his conquest of Southern Yan in 409–10, was to bring a large number of wheeled vehicles with the army. These do not seem to have been war chariots modeled on those of antiquity, and there is no evidence that they differed at all from the ordinary two-wheeled baggage carts of North China, more likely to be drawn by oxen than by horses. The carts could be deployed to create instant field fortifications to cover the army's flanks or buttress an infantry formation about to be attacked by cavalry.[15] Since the southern armies were often tied to waterways because of their logistical needs, boats could also be used to support and assist infantry forces. In particular, they could serve as protected, mobile firing platforms from which archers, crossbowmen, and the operators of various types of missile-throwing engines might harrass the enemy – much like the armored trains employed by twentieth-century Chinese warlords.

As should already be clear from the brief recitation of failed "northern expeditions" given above, the southern armies were also hamstrung by logistical difficulties. The failure of Huan Wen in Guanzhong in 354 demonstrated that a southern army campaigning in the north could not count on being able to live off the land, and the campaign could not continue if the troops could not be fed. Liu Yu's success against Southern Yan owed much to his opponents' failure to adopt the same scorched-earth strategy as Former Qin. Because of the uncertainty involved in trying to provision an army from local sources, most southern campaigns in the north relied on food supplies brought up from the south. And this, in turn, tied the southern armies to the network of waterways in the North China Plain, especially streams such as the Bian and the Si that rose not far from the Yellow River and then flowed southeastward into the Huai. In all economies before the coming of the railroad, water transport represented by far the cheapest and most efficient means of moving bulk commodities such as grain over long distances. Chinese river boats could carry very large loads, as much as 60,000 liters by some accounts; a typical cart-load was less than one-sixtieth of this. More important, however, was the fact that a boat's crew required rations equivalent to a much smaller percentage of total payload than was the case with draft animals and teamsters, pack animals and drivers, or human porterage. A wagon drawn by two oxen carrying 500 kilograms of grain would be empty at the end of twelve days if the draft animals were fed entirely from

the payload.[16] These relationships were well understood by medieval Chinese logisticians, and choices were made accordingly.[17] Reliance on water transport, however, led to serious vulnerabilities. The movement of supplies could be impeded by drought conditions, a difficulty faced by Huan Wen in 369, and the advance of an army could be held up by enemy forces occupying key points on the network of waterways. This situation, too, was faced by Huan Wen when his army failed to take Biankou and was therefore unable to divert water from the Yellow River to raise the level of the Bian River and other waterways in Henan. Southern armies dependent on long riverine supply lines were also vulnerable to attacks on those arteries by fast-moving northern cavalry forces since, given the size of the armies, the nature of their weaponry, and the lack of modern communications technology, there was no possibility of maintaining and defending a continuous front more than a few miles long. As we have seen, Huan Wen had to call off his 369 campaign when Former Yan forces succeeded in cutting his supply line.

Not only did the southern regimes encounter great difficulty in supplying their forces operating in the north, but they were also at a disadvantage in terms of total resources available for mobilization. In the primarily agricultural economy of medieval China, the military power of the state was largely a function of the number of registered farming households from which it could claim taxes (in the form of grain and homespun fabric) and corvée labor. The grain and fabrics were needed to feed, clothe, and reward soldiers, while corvée laborers performed many necessary noncombatant functions such as building and repairing fortifications, digging canals, and hauling supplies – and might also be called upon to fight. Few figures for registered population survive from the period of division, but those that do consistently indicate that the southern rulers commanded a much smaller resource base than their rivals in the north. In 464, for example, the Song dynasty recorded 906,870 households containing a total of 4,685,501 individuals, and there is reason to believe that by the time the Chen dynasty fell in 589 the registered population had fallen to approximately 500,000 households and 2,000,000 individuals. In the north, on the other hand, a single regional regime, the Former Yan state that confronted Huan Wen's northern expedition of 369, could claim 2,458,969 households and 9,987,935 individuals.[18] When the north was united as a single realm, the imbalance was even greater. On the eve of the Six Garrisons revolt, Northern Wei had a registered population of approximately 5,000,000 households and 32,000,000 individuals.[19] There is no question that the numbers for the south are far below the actual population of the region, especially in light of the waves of migration from the north

and the many signs of a vibrant and growing regional economy. The important point, however, is that the southern rulers did not have full access to this population for purposes of tax and corvée because so many people were sheltered as the tenants or dependants of powerful families.[20]

This was not the only way in which the southern regimes were handicapped by their political and social environment. The competition of great families for power and influence at court, the tensions between northern émigrés and native southern elites, and the struggles between centralizing court officials and provincial magnates all tended to hinder the south's efforts to recover northern territories. One reason that Zu Ti's operations in Henan received so little support from the Eastern Jin government was the suspicion and hostility of members of the Wang family who formed the dominant element at the court in Jiankang. Similarly, the court made every effort to restrain Huan Wen's drive to launch a northern expedition in the early 350s for fear that it would make him too strong to manage. From very early on in Eastern Jin, there was a tendency to subordinate irredentist desires to the immediate demands of southern politics, and this tendency became ever stronger with the passage of time.[21] There is no reason to doubt the genuineness of Zu Ti's zeal for a *reconquista*. With Huan Wen in the middle years of the fourth century, the issue is murkier; he was accused of seeking to use the recovery of the north as a springboard to usurpation.[22] When we come to Liu Yu in the early fifth century, however, there is little doubt that northern campaigns were intended to serve political ambitions. The conquest of Southern Yan in 409–10 increased Liu's prestige and strengthened his hand at court, while the Guanzhong campaign of 416–17 was supposed to pave the way for his establishment of the Song dynasty. It is significant that Liu abandoned the campaign and rushed back to Jiankang as soon as his position there appeared to be in jeopardy, and that he did not bother to renew operations in the north after taking the southern throne for himself in 420.[23] The native southern elites had never had much interest in recovering the north. After the passage of a couple of generations, the émigré families came to share this attitude. Despite ritualistic pronouncements to the contrary, they regarded the south as their home and were concerned primarily with safeguarding their position there.[24] Risky, large-scale offensive campaigns held little attraction. From the middle of the fifth century down to the last days of the Chen dynasty, the south's northern campaigns were generally aimed at restoring or securing threatened borders and making limited territorial gains. Reconquest had all but disappeared from the agenda.

Although they were influenced by rather different concerns, northern

rulers, too, were seldom able to make the conquest of the south a priority. When the north was divided among two or more states, their leaders were concerned primarily with their rivalry with one another. If there was energy and attention to devote to the south, it was usually channelled into the conquest of border regions whose annexation served to increase the strength of the state vis-à-vis its principal northern rival. Northern Zhou expansion in Sichuan and the valley of the Han River conformed to this pattern, to give one example. Even when the north was united under a single government, ethnic conflicts and tensions between Han Chinese, North Asians, and proto-Tibetan groups such as the Qiang could be a major cause of weakness and instability. We have already seen how a military setback in his great southern campaign of 383 triggered the rapid collapse of Fu Jian's Former Qin empire as his Qiang and Xianbei subjects turned against him.[25] The apparently all-out effort launched by Fu Jian had no real parallel in the years between the Jin conquest of Wu in 280 and the Sui conquest of Chen in 588–9. For most of the period of division, northern regimes were content with limited offensives to achieve incremental gains at the expense of the south. This pattern was a reflection not only of internal conflicts and other distractions, but also of material and logistical difficulties comparable to those which hampered the south's offensive campaigns. The fierce, mobile northern cavalry forces enjoyed a tremendous advantage in the open field, but were often frustrated by the many towns and cities, fortified and strongly garrisoned, that dotted the borderlands. In 422–3, for example, the 10,000 Song defenders of Hulao, just south of the Yellow River, were able to hold up a much larger Wei army for some 200 days. Another Wei army that attacked Zhongli on the Huai River in 507 was even less successful; the 3000 Liang defenders held out for three months until a relief army arrived to drive off the besiegers.[26] Nor were northern armies free of the logistical vulnerabilities that dogged their southern opponents. In 379 the Northern Headquarters general Liu Laozhi forced the retreat of a Qin army by destroying its baggage train and capturing its supply vessels.[27]

The way in which a daring northern offensive could be contained by a combination of geography, enemy fortifications, and supply problems is nicely illustrated by the southern campaign of the Wei Emperor Taiwu in the winter of 450–1. This followed hard on the heels of the defeat of the Song forces that had advanced to the Yellow River earlier in 450. Emperor Taiwu opted to bypass the Song garrisons along the Huai River and make a lightning thrust to the Yangzi with his cavalry. He reached Guabu, on the north bank of the river not far from Jiankang, on February 1, 451, only ten days after crossing the Huai. This move created alarm in the Song capital; troops and war vessels

were stationed along the south bank of the river over a distance of more than a hundred miles and the river fleet was placed under the overall command of the crown prince. The Wei ruler made noises about crossing the river, but this was surely bluff since his men had neither the vessels nor the skills they would need to overcome the Song fleet. With both men and horses now beginning to suffer from a shortage of provisions, Taiwu withdrew northward on February 18. En route, he laid siege to the town of Xuyi on the Huai in order to capture grain supplies that would feed his army on its retreat across Henan to the Yellow River. The defenses of Xuyi held firm for several weeks, however, and when sickness broke out in the Wei camp and reports arrived that a Song fleet was ascending the Huai River from the sea, Emperor Taiwu abandoned the siege and withdrew into Henan to avoid being trapped by the enemy warships. He had laid waste to half a dozen Song provinces and led some 50,000 captives back to the north, but had also suffered heavy losses himself and had no real territorial gains to show for his efforts.[28] Even though he took care to launch his campaign in the winter, Emperor Taiwu found the south to be an inhospitable environment. Summer operations would have been even more difficult, as the Wei statesman Cui Hao had pointed out many years earlier:

> The southern soil is low-lying and damp, and the summer months are steamy and hot; this is precisely the season that torrential rains are frequent and the vegetation is dense and deep. Sicknesses will surely arise. … Moreover, the enemy will make strict preparations in advance; he will certainly make his walls strong and defend them stoutly. If you encamp the army to assault them, provisions will not be supplied; and if you divide your troops to pillage, you will have nothing left with which to counter the enemy.[29]

An element of the southern scene that Cui did not mention, but one that had an important effect on the outcome of Emperor Taiwu's campaign, was the presence of many rivers and other waterways. These presented serious obstacles to northern cavalry, while at the same providing avenues for the rapid movement of southern water forces. In their defensive operations on the Yangzi and the Huai just as in their offensive forays into Henan, the southern regimes relied heavily on warships and waterborne mobility. The vessels used were of many types and sizes, ranging from towering, multiple-decked warships carrying hundreds of sailors and marines to small patrol boats and skirmishing craft with only a handful of men on board. Although there seem to have been many differences in design, most of these vessels surely shared certain basic features that were almost ubiquitous in traditional Chinese shipbuilding. These included a flat-bottomed, carvel-built hull lacking keel, stempost, and stern-post, with transoms at stem and stern and hull planking attached to solid transverse bulkheads rather than frame or ribs.[30] Most war vessels were powered both by sails, usually of rattan and matting construction, and by oars. A variety of tactics were used in battle. In

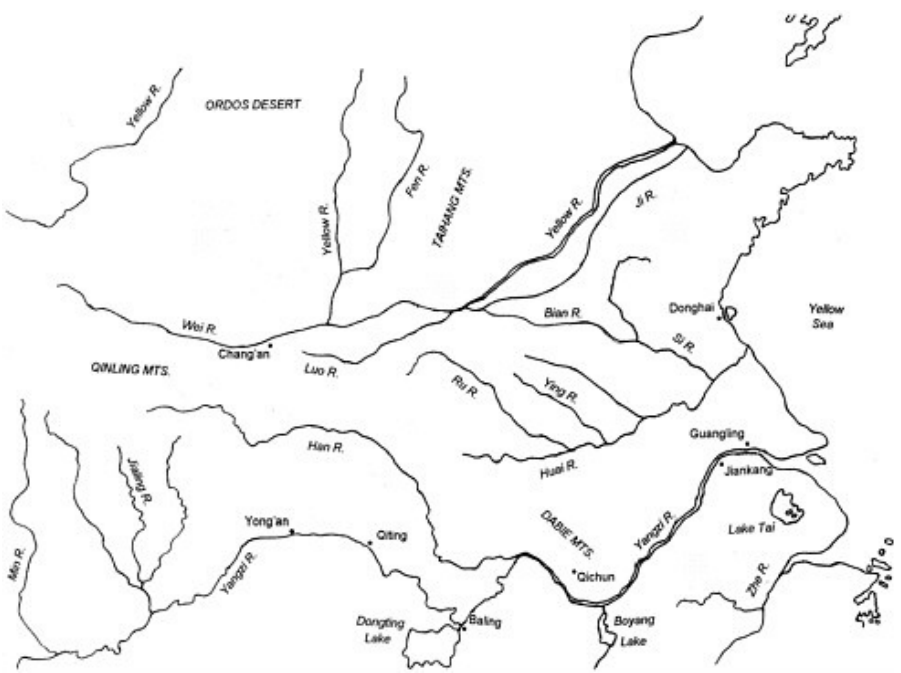
contrast to traditional Mediterranean naval warfare, Chinese river battles do not seem to have involved the use of large numbers of vessels as rams. This situation may have been influenced by the fact that the Chinese craft lacked the keels that provided the structural basis for Mediterranean rams, though there was no reason why separate ram-like devices could not have been attached to the front of Chinese warships. The capture of vessels by boarding, though by no means unheard-of, also seems to have been less common in China than in the West. The most common tactics involved the use of missiles to damage enemy vessels and kill or injure members of their crews.[31] Most vessels carried archers and crossbowmen, and the larger warships deployed lever-operated trebuchets on their topmost decks. The outcome of a battle could be greatly influenced by a difference in the size and range of the crossbows used by the two sides, as happened when Liu Yu defeated Lu Xun's rebel fleet on the Yangzi at the end of 410.[32] As protection against missiles, some vessels had their upper decks roofed over or their sides "armored" with ox hides. Crewmen took refuge behind wooden battlements or shot their weapons through loopholes in the sides of the ships. The heavy emphasis on missile combat tended to favor defense over offense in naval actions and made it rather difficult to eliminate sturdily built enemy ships (as opposed to simply killing crewmen). The major exception to this general rule was an attack with fireships, which could do great damage to an unwary opponent under the right conditions.[33] Operations on the rivers of southern China differed from naval warfare in several significant ways. Battles were almost always fought in tightly enclosed spaces with little room for maneuver, and the direction of an enemy's approach was seldom uncertain. River currents gave the advantage to an attacker coming from upstream, but this was linked to the danger that the attacker might have difficulty escaping in the event of a defeat. Above all, river fleets usually had to cooperate very closely with land forces, and often carried large numbers of soldiers that could be disembarked to capture cities and forts or attack enemy armies.[34]

During the 600-year span from Western Jin to the fall of Tang, the usual – indeed, almost the only – use for Chinese naval forces was on the country's rivers and inland waterways. During the great conflicts between north and south, war fleets were used to transport armies of invasion across or along rivers – or to prevent hostile forces from getting across the major rivers. Coastal waters, on the other hand, tended to be neglected. China was not threatened by forces coming from the sea in this period, and there were few tempting targets for overseas expansion. The only major seaborne expeditions were those launched by Sui and Tang rulers against the states of the Korean

peninsula during the seventh century. This overall situation was in stark contrast to the more aggressive use of naval forces by Byzantines, Arabs, and Norsemen at the other end of the Eurasian landmass, but it was a logical response to China's peculiar geography and strategic environment.

During the country's prolonged division between north and south, southern mastery of the tools and techniques of riverine warfare conferred a huge defensive advantage. Northern regimes were more accustomed to cavalry warfare and were not in the habit of maintaining strong water forces. The drier north produced fewer individuals with the necessary skills, and northern shipbuilders tended to produce smaller vessels suitable for the relatively shallow northern rivers.[35] Northern armies were usually at a loss when confronted with a wide river patrolled by a southern fleet. Emperor Taiwu spoke of cutting reeds to construct rafts that would float his men and horses across the Yangzi, but wisely chose not to attempt the crossing.[36] If a northern power wished to conquer Jiankang, it had little choice but to build a real fleet of its own that would be capable of wresting control of the Yangzi away from the southerners – as Jin had done in 279–80.

This was precisely the path followed by the Sui founder Yang Jian in the late 580s. By this time, he enjoyed several advantages that had not always figured in earlier northern campaigns against the south. A unified north was now able to



bring overwhelming force to bear against Chen, and earlier conquests made by Northern Zhou meant that this force could be launched from very near at hand. Sui forces did not have to worry about reducing enemy fortresses on the Huai River or maintaining long supply lines since they already controlled all the north bank of the Yangzi, and possession of the Sichuan basin on the upper Yangzi made it possible for Sui to send a great fleet down the river as Jin had done in 279. Preparations for a Sui attack on Chen began in earnest in 587. War vessels were built in large numbers at several locations, including the coastal Donghai commandery just south of the Shandong peninsula, Qichun in today's Hubei province, and the Han River valley. The largest shipbuilding effort was at Yong'an, on the Yangzi in southwestern Sichuan, where Yang Su, to judge from the reported size of the fleet he later commanded, must have constructed thousands of new craft. The largest of these were the great Five-Banner warships. These had five decks, were capable of accommodating 800 men, and were outfitted with six 50-foot-long, spike-bearing booms (*paigan*) that could be dropped from the vertical to damage enemy vessels or pin them in a position where they would be raked by close-range missile fire. A second class of vessels called Yellow Dragons could carry 100 men each, and there seem to have been other types of smaller craft as well.[37]

By the late autumn of 588, eight Sui armies totalling 518,000 men were in position on the north side of the Yangzi from Sichuan to the sea. In addition to Yang Su's force at Yong'an, these included a mixed land and water force based at Xiangyang on the Han River under the nominal leadership of Yang Jian's third son Yang Jun, Prince of Qin, the flotilla at Qichun, and four land armies along the lower Yangzi under the overall authority of Yang Jian's second son, Yang Guang. The eighth force was the fleet that had been built on the seacoast at Donghai; under the leadership of Yan Rong, it was supposed to move by sea to invade the coastal area near Lake Tai. It is worth noting that three of the eight Sui commands were composed entirely or primarily of water forces, while a fourth, that of Yang Jun on the Han River, also had a significant naval component.[38] Facing the Sui forces were perhaps 100,000 Chen troops to cover the entire distance from the Yangzi gorges to the sea; the largest concentrations were stationed at the western end of the line and near Jiankang itself.[39] The basic Sui strategy was to use Yang Su's forces on the upper Yangzi to pin the Chen fleet there and thereby create favorable conditions for Yang Guang's armies to cross the lower Yangzi. If this plan failed and the

upstream Chen forces broke away to help defend Jiankang, it would still be possible for Yang Su to sweep down the river and assist the Sui armies in taking the Chen capital.[40]

The Sui offensive was opened by Yang Su's river fleet. In the twelfth lunar month of 588 (December 24 to January 21, 589) Yang led his force downstream through the Yangzi gorges. Most of the ensuing combats took place along a fifty-mile stretch of the Yangzi above and below the modern city of Yichang, Hubei.[41] The first Chen resistance was encountered at the Wolf's Tail rapids, where a hundred warships of the Green Dragon class, supported by several thousand men in palisade forts built on the precipitous terrain of the north and south banks, contested passage of the river. Fearing that his ships would be vulnerable to attack if they attempted to negotiate the rapids in daylight, Yang launched a three-pronged attack on the Chen position under cover of darkness. While he himself led a large portion of his fleet downstream past the forts (with crewmen and marines biting on sticks to guarantee noise discipline), two land columns made simultaneous attacks on the Chen positions north and south of the river. The operation was a complete success, and almost all of the Chen troops were taken prisoner.[42] Yang Su encountered the next obstacle about twenty miles downstream at Qiting, where the Chen general Lü Zhongsu had stretched three iron chains across the river to bar the passage of the Sui fleet. Once again, Yang found it necessary to land troops to capture the enemy positions on the shore. After a large number of unsuccessful attacks in which more than 5000 Sui soldiers were lost (with their opponents cutting off the noses of Sui dead in order to claim rewards from their commander), the Chen forts were finally carried in another night attack, enabling Yang's men to remove the chains. Lü Zhongsu withdrew his fleet to Yan Island beneath Mount Jingmen. Yang Su now sent four of his massive Five-Banner warships, crewed by a thousand Man aborigines from southeastern Sichuan, to lead the attack on the Chen fleet. They destroyed a dozen or more of the Chen vessels with their spiked booms, and this led to the destruction of the enemy fleet and the capture of more than two thousand prisoners. After the battle at Yan Island, all the Chen defenses east of Baling (at the mouth of Dongting Lake) collapsed as garrisons abandoned their posts and fled. Chen Huiji, the garrison commander at Gong'an, attempted to bring 30,000 men and over a thousand ships down the Yangzi to reinforce the defenses of Jiankang, but he was blocked by the Sui forces of Yang Jun, Prince of Qin, who had descended the Han River to its confluence with the Yangzi. By this time, however, Jiankang had already fallen.[43]

On January 22, 589, the first day of the new year by Chinese reckoning, Heruo Bi, an army commander under Yang Guang, brought

his troops across the Yangzi from Guangling. This surprise move was facilitated by a long period of preparation and deception. Heruo had hidden all of his serviceable boats while exposing derelict junks in plain view by the river bank. When his men returned to Guangling from guard duty along the river, he had them march in with flags flying and set up new encampments as if they were fresh troops arriving. The Chen forces on the south side of the river were initially deceived by this and made ready to repel an imminent attack, but when they saw through Heruo's ruse (as they were meant to do) they relaxed their guard. Heruo also conducted large hunts near the river bank, so that Chen sentries came to regard any commotion on the opposite shore as nothing out of the ordinary.[44] Heruo's sudden offensive move was also aided greatly by the fact that Chen had concentrated all of its war vessels from the lower Yangzi at Jiankang, with infighting among court officials preventing their redeployment to patrol stations along the river.[45] Heruo was able to take the important city of Jingkou on January 27. Meanwhile, a smaller Sui force of only 500 men under Han Qinhu had slipped across the Yangzi upstream of Jiankang to capture the town of Caishi. Their task was made easier by the drunkenness of the Chen garrison. Reinforced to 20,000 men, Han's column advanced on Jiankang from the south while Heruo's troops closed in from the northeast. Disregarding advice from one of his generals that he avoid battle while sending warships to cut off the Sui forces operating south of the river, the Chen ruler sent his army out to attack Heruo Bi's troops on February 10, 589.[46]

The battle took place on the high ground a few miles east of Jiankang. The five contingents that made up the Chen army deployed along a front of more than six miles, with the result that they were unable to support one another effectively. Only the southernmost Chen division under Lu Guangda showed any initiative in attacking Heruo Bi's army of 8000, which was pushed back several times with the loss of 273 men. Heruo finally escaped from this onslaught by pulling back behind a smokescreen (probably created by setting fire to the grass), then turned around to attack another of the Chen divisions. This unit had little stomach for a fight and soon turned tail and fled; as soon as the rest of the Chen army became aware of what had happened, the rout became general. While Heruo Bi was fighting east of the city, Han Qinhu's army was approaching the southern gate. Some of the Chen troops stationed there fled, while a general who had just surrendered persuaded others to lay down their arms. Han proceeded to the palace and made the Chen ruler his prisoner before Heruo, who had encountered more resistance, was able to enter the city through the northern gate. The two Sui generals would later squabble over their relative merit in the taking of Jiankang, until the emperor stepped in

to declare their contributions to be of equal value.[47]

The submission of the rest of the Chen empire followed very quickly after the fall of Jiankang. Yang Guang had the captured Chen ruler write letters instructing his remaining upriver commanders to surrender, an instruction that almost all of them chose to obey. Having already defeated a Chen force at the mouth of the Qi River, Wang Shiji's flotilla from Qichun moved south to receive the surrender of the administrative units in what is now Jiangxi province.[48] The only significant resistance anywhere in the south came from the governor of Wu commandery, by the shore of Lake Tai. He was attacked by an overland column dispatched from Yang Guang's army at Jiankang, and by Yan Rong's fleet, which made its way from the sea into Lake Tai. By the end of the second lunar month, resistance in this region had been crushed.[49] With the help of a powerful aboriginal leader, the far south was also brought into line with little difficulty.[50]

During the campaign of 588–9, Sui commanders made real efforts to win the southerners over. Heruo Bi imposed severe measures to prevent his troops from looting, while Yang Su made a point of releasing the Chen soldiers that he captured. This was a striking contrast with the earlier behavior of Western Wei and Northern Zhou armies, which had dragged off tens of thousands of southern captives to slavery in the north.[51] From the perspective of 589, the south had been pacified with surprising ease and the Sui policy of restraint appeared to be an unqualified success.

Toward the end of the following year, however, an extremely violent anti-Sui rebellion began in the Lake Tai area and northern Zhejiang and spread south along the coast as far as present-day Vietnam. Newly appointed Sui officials in the affected areas were killed by the rebels; some of them were disemboweled or even cut up and eaten. How are we to account for the sudden change from the behavior of the southerners in 589? The Sui officials do not seem to have been especially cruel, oppressive, or exploitative. The difference was that the men who had yielded so quickly the year before were senior officials of the Chen dynasty, while those who led the new uprising represented a much broader stratum of local elites who suddenly found their interests adversely affected by the new administration. In particular, the Sui administrators seem to have challenged the time-honored privileges of the southern magnates, which would have included such things as immunity from taxation and the ability to conceal families of tenants and retainers from the state authorities with impunity. The revolt was sparked by a rumor, very likely spread by local elites, that the Sui government was planning the forced relocation of hundreds of thousands of southerners to new homes in the north.[52]

The Sui emperor named Yang Su to command an expeditonary army against the rebels; Yang crossed the Yangzi near Jingkou and defeated several rebel forces, and then carried the campaign into what is now Zhejiang. He sent one of his subordinate commanders, Shi Wansui, with 2000 men to campaign against other rebel groups in the mountainous coastal regions further to the south. It is reported that Shi marched more than 300 miles and fought more than 700 engagements, and that his whereabouts were unknown to Yang Su's headquarters for more than a hundred days. Yang eventually put an end to the rebellion by persuading one of the two principal rebel leaders remaining in the field to turn on his colleague and hand him over to Sui in exchange for his own life.[53] From this time on, the south seems to have been firmly under Sui control. Southern separatism would not assert itself again until the Sui dynasty began to lose its grip on the entire country in the second decade of the seventh century.

Notes

1 These events are described in much greater detail in Wright, *The Sui Dynasty*, pp. 58–63, 110–13.

2 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 176, p. 5483; *Sui shu*, ch. 48, pp. 1282–3.

3 Fu Lecheng, "We Jin Nanbeichao zhanshi," pp. 14–15. Also see the analysis in Zhang Tieniu and Gao Xiaoxing, *Zhongguo gudai haijun shi* (Beijing: Bayi chubanshe, 1993), pp. 54–6.

4 For Zu Ti, see *Jin shu*, ch. 62, pp. 1695–7; and Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 88, p. 2801, and ch. 91, p. 2889.

5 The leader in the 330s was Yu Liang; see *Jin shu*, ch. 73, p. 1923. The 353 campaign was led by Yin Hao; see Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, p. 334.

6 Fu Lecheng, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao zhanshi," p. 30.

7 Fu Lecheng, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao zhanshi," pp. 30–1; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 102, pp. 3214–18.

8 Fu Lecheng, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao zhanshi," pp. 31–2.

9 Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, pp. 378–83; Fu Lecheng, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao zhanshi," pp. 32–3; He Ziquan, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilue*, p. 118.

10 Fu Lecheng, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao zhanshi," p. 33.

11 Fu Lecheng, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao zhanshi," p. 34.

12 Xu Hui, "Nanbeichao zhanzheng tedian tanxi," *Jiang hai xuekan*, 1991, No. 3, p. 119.

13 Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, p. 445.

14 Chen Yinke, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiangyanlu*, pp. 227–8, 236–7; Lü Simian, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao shi*, pp. 1202–3, 1306–7.

15 Lü Simian, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao shi*, p. 1307. One pundit blames the defeat of the Song army near Huatai in 449 on their failure to bring carts as Liu Yu had done; see Fu Lecheng, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao zhanshi," p. 34. For more on Chinese carts, see Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 4: *Physics and Physical Technology*, pt. 2: *Mechanical Engineering* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 250, 319–20, and plates 189 and 213.

16 Graff, "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition," pp. 103–17. For a comparison of the cost of various forms of transport based on modern data and expressed in terms of kilograms of grain or grain-equivalent expended to move one ton a distance of one kilometer, see Colin Clark and Margaret Haswell, *The Economics of Subsistence Agriculture*, 4th edition (London: St Martin's Press, 1970), Table 47, pp. 196–8.

17 See, for example, the arguments presented by Diao Yong in Wei Shou, *Wei shu*, ch. 38, pp.

868–9.

18 Chen Yinke, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao jiangyanlu*, pp. 226–7.

19 Zhu Dawei, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi nongmin zhanzheng de shehui houguo," in *Zhongguo nongmin zhanzheng shi luncong*, vol. 5 (n.p.: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1987), p. 32.

20 Tang Changru, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao Sui Tang shi san lun*, pp. 88–90.

21 Ochi Shigeaki, "To-Shin cho chuogen kaifuku no ichi kosatsu," *Toyo gakuho*, 38.1 (June 1955), pp. 76, 80–2.

22 Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, pp. 333, 338; but also see Rogers, *The Chronicle of Fu Chien*, p. 60.

23 Ochi, "To-Shin cho chuogen kaifuku no ichi kosatsu," pp. 83–4; Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, vol. 1, pp. 367, 381.

24 Ochi, "To-Shin cho chuogen kaifuku no ichi kosatsu," pp. 84–5; Rogers, *The Chronicle of Fu Chien*, pp. 52–3, 65, 60.

25 Many scholars have identified ethnic tension as a fundamental weakness in the northern polity, and one that imposed limits on the ability of northern rulers to coerce the south. See, for example, Chen Yinke, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiangyanlu*, p. 229, and Xu Hui, "Nanbeichao zhanzheng tedian tanxi," p. 120.

26 Xu Hui, "Nanbeichao zhanzheng tedian tanxi," p. 120.

27 Zhou Nianchang, "Dong Jin bei fu bing de jianli ji qi tedian," p. 161.

28 A summary description of the campaign can be found in Fu Lecheng, "Wei Jin Nanbeichao zhanshi," p. 34; a more detailed account can be found in Sima Guang, *Zhizhi tongjian*, ch. 125, pp. 3957–60, and ch. 126, pp. 3961–7.

29 *Wei shu*, ch. 35, p. 819.

30 Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 4: *Physics and Physical Technology*, pt. 3: *Civil Engineering and Nautics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 391. Needham discusses the different types of warships on pp. 424–5 and 685–6. Also see Li Tse-fen, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao lishi lunwenji*, vol. 2, pp. 261–3, and Rafe de Crespigny, *Generals of the South: The Foundation and Early History of the Three Kingdoms State of Wu*, Faculty of Asian Studies Monographs, New Series No. 16 (Canberra: The Australian National University Faculty of Asian Studies, 1990), pp. 277–80.

31 For discussions of Chinese naval tactics, see Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 4, pt. 3, pp. 449, 678–85 and 690, as well as de Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, pp. 278–81.

32 Lü Simian, *Liang Jin Nanbeichao shi*, p. 1308; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 115, p. 3640.

33 De Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, pp. 281–2.

34 De Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, p. 281.

35 Lü Simian, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi*, p. 1217.

36 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 125, p. 3959.

37 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 176, p. 5494; *Sui shu*, ch. 48, p. 1283; Zhang Tieniu and Gao Xiaoxing, *Zhongguo gudai haijun shi*, pp. 62–4. My understanding of the *paigan* and their function is based on Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 4, pt. 3, p. 690.

38 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 176, pp. 5497–8; Zhang Tieniu and Gao Xiaoxing, *Zhongguo gudai haijun shi*, p. 64.

39 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 176, p. 5499. This number does not seem reliable, and is contradicted by another number (ch. 177, p. 5506) that seems equally unreliable. More than 30,000 Chen troops appear to have been stationed near the Yangzi gorges (ch. 177, p. 5512).

40 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 176, p. 5494.

41 This follows the placement of battle sites in Tan Qixiang (ed.), *Zhongguo lishi dituji*, vol. 5, maps 26–7.

42 *Sui shu*, ch. 48, p. 1283; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 176, p. 5499.

43 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 177, pp. 5511–12; *Sui shu*, ch. 48, p. 1283.

44 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 177, p. 5504.

45 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 176, pp. 5500–1.

46 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 177, pp. 5505–7.

47 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 177, pp. 5507–9, 5518.

48 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 177, pp. 5506, 5512–13.

49 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 177, pp. 5513–14; *Sui shu*, ch. 61, pp. 1463–4.

50 See Wright, *The Sui Dynasty*, pp. 150–3.

51 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 177, p. 5505; *Sui shu*, ch. 48, p. 1283.

52 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 177, pp. 5529–30.

53 These campaigns are described in Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 177, pp. 5530–2.

CHAPTER SEVEN
The Koguryo War and the fall of the Sui dynasty

The Sui conquest of Chen in 589 restored a political unity to all of the Chinese cultural area, north and south, that had not been seen since the early years of the fourth century. This reunification was accomplished by military means, but the Sui rulers Yang Jian (Emperor Wen) and his son and successor Yang Guang (Emperor Yang) did not rely entirely on force of arms to hold their new empire together. The first Sui emperor introduced a more centralized system for the recruitment of government officials, one that brought new talent into government service and began to make systematic use of written examinations to evaluate candidates for office. Although the top echelon of the Sui administration continued to be dominated by men of the same northwestern aristocracy that had run the Northern Zhou state, men from all regions of the empire occupied lower-level offices and came to identify their own interests with the new dynasty. Emperor Wen promulgated new legal and ritual codes for the entire empire, and engaged in various forms of symbolic and ideological propaganda to build support for his regime. He expressed support for traditional Confucian norms of virtuous behavior and promoted Confucian scholarship, and gave limited encouragement to Daoism as well. Above all, however, Emperor Wen, himself a devout Buddhist, sought to use the Buddhist faith shared by his subjects in both north and south to knit the realm together and legitimate his own rule. He appealed to Buddhist principles, sponsored the establishment of a large number of new Buddhist temples, and sought to present himself to his people as a Cakravartin king – a divinely-ordained Buddhist ruler – all while establishing tight government control over the Buddhist clergy.[1]

Some of the measures that the Sui rulers adopted to promote imperial unity and internal tranquility involved adjustments in the military system they had inherited from Northern Zhou. On June 16, 590, very shortly after the conquest of Chen, Emperor Wen issued the following decree:

At the end of Wei there was chaos and loss, and the empire's territory was divided like a melon. Mobilization for military service occurred every year, and there was no time for rest. Soldiers and men of the armies were placed under the authority of wards [*fang*] and headquarters [*fu*], campaigning to the north and attacking to the south with no fixed place of residence. Their dwellings did not have complete walls, and seldom did their land possess mulberry trees. They were always wandering lodgers, without the identifying label of hometown or neighborhood. We pity them deeply! All military men [*junren*] shall be subordinated to the prefectures and counties. Their cultivation of the land and household registration shall be the same as for ordinary subjects [*min*]. As for control and leadership by

the headquarters, it is appropriate that this should be according to the old pattern. The newly established military headquarters [*junfu*] in Shandong, Henan and the lands along the northern frontier shall be abolished.[2]

The last measure announced in the edict appears to have been aimed primarily at new local military units that had been set up in the southern part of the former Qi realm as part of Sui's preparations for the attack on Chen, and it is congruent with other post-conquest policies of Emperor Wen that aimed at the demilitarization of eastern and southern China. On April 12, 595, for example, it was decreed that all the weapons of the empire were to be gathered by the authorities, and that henceforth anyone who dared to engage in the private fabrication of arms would be subject to prosecution. Several years later another decree ordered the confiscation of all boats in the south that were more than thirty feet long – long enough, that is, to be useful in warfare. These measures were clearly aimed at the recently-conquered territories of Qi and Chen, and in fact the edict of 595 explicitly exempted the Sui heartland of Guanzhong from the weapons ban.[3]

The bulk of the 590 edict, however, addresses somewhat different concerns. It appears that during the course of the campaigns that brought about the fall of Northern Qi in 578 and the conquest of Chen in 589, many military units were moved from their original homes in Guanzhong to new locations in the eastern plain. The soldiers were often accompanied by their dependants, but they were unable to establish lasting settlements because of frequent redeployments dictated by the needs of imperial strategy. They and their families were subject to their military commanders rather than to local civil authorities, and Sui at first continued the established Zhou practice of registering military households separately from ordinary commoners who had fixed places of residence and were in most cases farmers. With the reunification of the empire it became possible for these people to settle down on a more permanent basis, and this appears to have been the main object of Emperor Wen's edict. Henceforth soldiers and their families were to be registered by the local civil authorities together with the rest of the population. They would now receive grants of land from the government under the long-established land distribution (and tax collection) scheme known as the "equal-field" system just as ordinary farm families did, which would no doubt allow them to better provide for their own upkeep and thereby reduce the army's demands on state resources. At the same time, however, the soldiers continued to be listed in registers kept by the local military authorities and were expected to fulfill their military obligations as before. All of this clearly served Emperor Wen's unifying and centralizing agenda. The military effectiveness of the troops was not impaired, but the hold of military commanders over their subordinates

was considerably weakened.[4]

These provisions of the edict of 590 are generally understood to have been directed at the forces descended from the old Twenty-four Armies of Northern Zhou, that is, the troops that later came to be known as the "soldiers of the headquarters" (*fubing*). Their organization had evolved considerably by the early years of the Sui dynasty. The number of "cavalry generals" had greatly increased over the twenty-four recorded back in 550, and their rank had declined. Instead of commanding "armies," they now appear as the leaders of local headquarters (*fu*) controlling units of regimental size that were the basic building blocks of the Sui military structure. The "chariot-and-horse generals" experienced a comparable increase in numbers and decline in status. Some continued to have their own headquarters and command regimental-sized units of their own, but most became deputy commanders in the headquarters of the cavalry generals.[5] Some (but apparently not all) of the local regiments led by the cavalry generals and chariot-and-horse generals were under the authority of local area commanders (*zong guan*), and some (but apparently not all) were subordinated to the imperial guard commands in the capital. Emperor Wen expanded the number of guard commands to twelve from the four that had existed under Northern Zhou.[6] In early Sui, soldiers from the local regiments seem to have performed rotational service in the capital under the guard command with which their unit was affiliated. This system may well have been based on the established model of corvée labor, under which adult male peasants were required to perform approximately one month of service each year on a rotational basis.[7] Among the various regiments, a distinction was maintained between those descended from the (mainly Xianbei) imperial guards of Western Wei and Zhou and those that had been raised from among the farming population, and in addition there were also small units of imperial bodyguards composed of sons and other young kinsmen of the ruling elite.[8] This elaborately divided command structure worked to the emperor's advantage in that it prevented individual officers from disposing of enough military power to threaten the throne. Guard generals would have had little opportunity to forge personal ties with soldiers doing their brief tours of rotational service in the capital.

Soon after his succession to the throne in 604, Yang Guang began introducing significant changes in the Sui military system to further tighten central control. At the beginning of 605, he ordered the abolition of all of the thirty-nine remaining area commands (*zong guan fu*). The area command was the Northern Zhou variant of a widespread institutional practice already several centuries old by the beginning of the sixth century, namely the granting of both civil and

military authority to local administrators. An area commander was responsible for the civil administration of the prefecture (*zhou*) in which he had his headquarters, while exercising military command authority over the forces of several neighboring prefectures. The area commands in some ways resemble the Byzantine "themes" (*themata*) that appeared after the Arab onslaught in the middle of the seventh century, and like them evolved in response to military needs.[9] The system provided a flexible tool for dealing with the frequent military crises of the age of division, but it was considerably less useful under the new, unified imperial order that obtained after 589. The number of area commands was reduced after the early years of the dynasty, and those that remained were located mainly in places important for covering the capital, maintaining a hold on the south, or guarding the empire's external frontiers. This arrangement, however, seems to have left greater concentrations of military power in the provinces than Emperor Yang was willing to tolerate. When the area commands were abolished, their military units were subordinated to the various guard commands in the capital and began to perform service there by rotation. This meant a large increase in the total number of regimental-size units reporting to the imperial guards.[10]

Two years after the abolition of the area commands, Emperor Yang introduced further reforms in the military system. The number of guard commands was expanded from twelve to sixteen, and the structure of the local units that supplied them with soldiers was streamlined and rationalized. The "cavalry regimental headquarters" and "chariot-and-horse regimental headquarters" were reorganized on a single pattern as "soaring hawk regimental head-quarters" (*yingyang fu*); their deputy commanders were now clearly designated as such and no longer shared their title with the leaders of independant units.[11] About this time, probably because they were so much more numerous than in the past, the regimental headquarters became known by geographical identifiers instead of their original numerical designations. For example, a unit that had once been known as the "Third Valiant Cavalry of the Right Martial Guard" might now be called the "Dragon Spring Regimental Headquarters." We do not know the total number of regimental headquarters or the standard size of the individual unit.[12] It is generally agreed, however, that Emperor Yang greatly increased the number of units over what had existed in his father's day, and that he created new regiments in the eastern and southern parts of the empire – territories that had been part of Qi or Chen only a few years earlier. He was no less avid a centralizer than his father had been, but his methods were different. Instead of concentrating military power in the northwest to dominate the more recently conquered regions, he apparently sought to coopt the local

elites of the south and east by assigning them rank and office within the framework of a military system centered on the capital.[13] One man who was drawn into the Sui leadership structure by these means was Chen Leng, the leader of a unit of irregular local troops (*xiang bing*) in Lujiang, north of the Yangzi in today's Anhui province. He was made a cavalry general in the early years of Emperor Yang's reign, and later rose to a leadership position with one of the guard commands in the capital.[14]

There were many others like Chen Leng.[15] It is also worth noting, however, that the Sui military system did not perform its integrative function simply by drawing local powerholders into the service of the dynasty, as important as this was. Biographies of military leaders in the early seventh-century *History of the Sui Dynasty* indicate that promotion was often based on merit acquired in the field, and that military leadership positions were not the exclusive preserve of existing elites. Military service offered the prospect of career advancement and upward mobility to men from humble backgrounds. Wang Bian, the son of a merchant from Fengxiang in Guanzhong, began his military career as a junior officer under Northern Zhou and rose to become a regimental commander under Emperor Yang.[16] The most striking example of upward mobility, however, must be Zhang Dinghe. A man of Wannian, one of the two districts making up the Sui capital, Zhang was a poor but ambitious youth. He began his military career as an ordinary guardsman (*shiguan*) under one of the regimental headquarters. When the army was mobilized for the great offensive against Chen, Zhang was too poor to be able to provide for his own rations and tried (without success) to persuade his wife to sell her trousseau for that purpose. He participated in the campaign nevertheless, gained military merit, and was eventually promoted to valiant cavalry general, commandery governor, and major-general of the Left Garrison Guard.[17]

The restoration and maintenance of imperial unity, accomplished by means of both military campaigns and institutional arrangements, was clearly the central task of the early Sui military. There were also other problems to be dealt with, however. Most prominent of these was the challenge posed by the nomadic Turks, who received the main attention of the Sui armies for several years before preparations could begin in earnest for the attack on Chen. In 552, the Turks had supplanted their erstwhile masters, the Rouran, as the dominant power of the northern steppes, and they swiftly established control over a vast territory stretching from Manchuria west to the Aral Sea, and from Lake Baikal south to the Chinese frontier. The Turks easily gained the upper hand over the warring northern regimes of Zhou and Qi, extorting concessions from each of the two by threatening to ally

with its rival. Qi responded to the rising power of the Turks by building new defensive walls, some 900 *li* (300 miles) in 555 and another 400 *li* in 556. The Qi walls had small forts or outposts (*shu*) every ten *li*, and major forts to guard the most important strategic points.[18] These fortifications, however, bore little resemblance to the much later Ming "Great Wall" north of Beijing. Instead of being built of stone or fired bricks, they were constructed rather hastily by corvée laborers using the tamped earth (*hangtu*) method and were liable to deteriorate rapidly unless considerable further effort were put into maintaining them.[19]

The Turks met Yang Jian's establishment of the Sui dynasty with hostility. This may have had something to do with the belief of the new Turkish ruler, Shabolue Qaghan, that the Sui founder had not shown him sufficient respect, and with the fact that Shabolue's consort was a woman of the Yuwen family that Yang had just ousted from the throne of Northern Zhou.[20] It is also possible that the qaghan wished to impede the consolidation of the Sui regime for fear that the balance of power in eastern Asia would soon tip decisively in favor of a united China. At the end of 582, Shabolue launched large-scale raids on the commanderies north and west of the Wei River valley. Several Sui armies were beaten by the Turks, who plundered six commanderies and made off with large numbers of livestock.[21] The next spring, Sui forces counter-attacked and defeated Shabolue himself at the Baidao Pass, near today's Hohhot, Inner Mongolia. But at other points on the frontier, the Turks still seemed to have the upper hand; in the sixth month, for example, they were able to defeat and kill the Sui area commander for Youzhou.[22] Repeatedly, during the course of the 580s, Sui mobilized corvée laborers to repair sections of the long walls that had been built by Northern Qi.[23]

Sui soon managed to turn the tables on the Turks, not by means of wall-building or punitive expeditions, but because of deep divisions that emerged in the Turk polity in the second half of 583. Fighting broke out between Shabolue and his first cousin Apa, an important regional leader and the son of a former qaghan, and Apa asserted his own claim to supreme rulership of the Turks. The Turkish leadership structure was prone to such fissures, since there was no clear, agreed-upon rule for the transfer of political authority from one generation to the next. Succession to the rulership normally went laterally from brother to brother, but when a series of siblings was exhausted disputes over precedence could easily arise between first cousins.[24] This was what happened in 583. Apa was backed by Tardu, the regional ruler of the western portion of the Turk empire, while Sui now provided military support to its former enemy Shabolue. Defeated by Shabolue in the east, Apa turned on his ally Tardu and established

an independant qaghanate embracing all of the Turkish territory from Yiwu (Hami) west to the Aral Sea.[25] This marked the beginning of the lasting division of the Turks into feuding eastern and western realms. Their power was greatly reduced, and with the eastern qaghan Shabolue now beholden to Sui, it became possible for Yang Jian to concentrate on the conquest of Chen without fear for the safety of his northern borders. In later years, Sui actively sought to foster divisions within the Turkish leadership. A conflict erupted between Shabolue's son and successor, Dulan Qaghan, and a younger brother after Emperor Wen favored the latter with a woman of the Sui imperial family as his bride in 597. The Sui ruler provided his new Turkish client with strong military backing and installed him as Qimin Qaghan with headquarters in a fortress on the Sui border.[26] Within a few years, Qimin's forces prevailed and he established himself as the undisputed leader of the Eastern Turks. Under the leadership of Qimin and his successor Shibi, they remained largely subservient to Sui until 615. In the late summer of 605, a force of 20,000 Turks directed by a Sui officer carried out a surprise attack on another steppe people, the Khitan of southern Manchuria, who had been raiding the northeasternmost sector of the Chinese frontier.[27]

Sui's taming of the Eastern Turks was more a consequence of the cunning promotion and exploitation of splits within the Turkish leadership than the result of direct military action. Sui armies were not well equipped to deal with the Turks. They usually consisted of both infantry and cavalry, with the cavalry component made up largely of armored warriors riding armored horses. The horse armor was normally composed of small, rectangular sections (lamellae) of leather or metal, heavy enough to slow down the movement of the horse.[28] This sort of cavalry enjoyed a tactical advantage in fighting within China, where battles were fought in relatively confined spaces and one of the most important functions of mounted troops was to break infantry formations through shock action. On the open steppe, however, facing the much more mobile light cavalry of the Turks and other nomadic peoples, the heavily armored Sui horsemen must have found it difficult to come to grips with the enemy. At the operational level, this difficulty was compounded by logistical limitations. Chinese armies campaigning on the steppe normally carried their own provisions with them, using either pack animals or supply carts, which imposed limits on both the distances over which those armies could operate and the speed at which they could move. The logistics of the Turks and other steppe peoples were much more flexible. As long as they were moving through grasslands, the nomads' animals could feed on the grass and the soldiers could eat the animals. It was usual for each warrior of a steppe army to bring several additional horses, some

to serve as remounts and others to be killed and eaten by the army as the need arose.[29] Sui armies campaigning against nomads were also limited by what might be called a cautious tactical doctrine. Fearing that their troopers would be surprised or ambushed by the more maneuverable foe, most Sui generals were reluctant to use their cavalry aggressively against the Turks. They tended to move in large, square formations with infantry, cavalry, and carts positioned to provide mutual support; the usual position of the cavalry was in the center of a hollow square formed by infantry and carts, where they were available for a counterattack but could not be used for more proactive moves against the enemy. One of the few generals willing to break this mold was Yang Su, who had commanded the great Sui river fleet during the conquest of Chen. Campaigning against a hostile Turkish leader in 599, Yang complained that the square formation "is the way to make oneself secure, but is not sufficient to obtain victory." He deployed his cavalry in separate formations capable of offensive action and smashed the Turkish army.[30] His success does not seem to have had a great influence on other commanders. When Emperor Yang made a great progress along the northern frontier in 607, the square formation was once again the order of the day.[31]

The conquest of the south and the successful management of relations with the Turks left China's rulers free to move in other directions. Both Sui emperors sought to dominate neighboring states and peoples and recapture the glory of Han times – an agenda that had ominous implications for northern Vietnam and the Korean peninsula, which were now organized as independant states but had once been integral parts of the Han empire. Jiaozhou, the area around today's Hanoi, was easily recovered from a local ruler in 602. In the spring of 605, a Sui army pushed even farther south and invaded the coastal kingdom of Champa (known to the Chinese as Linyi), which had its capital near modern Danang. This particular expedition had less to do with the reconstruction of Han glories than with Emperor Wen's desire to lay hands on the fabled (and largely imaginary) riches of this southern land.[32] After the Sui army under Liu Fang crossed the Duli River, it was attacked by Champan troops on war elephants. Following initial reverses, Liu dug a number of pits, covered them with grass, and used a feigned flight to lure the elephants into the traps. The Sui troops also employed crossbows against the elephants, causing many of them to turn around and trample their own army. Liu then ordered his men to charge hard on the heels of the stampeding elephants, causing the collapse of the Champan army. He went on to occupy and loot the Champan capital, but on the return march his army was stricken by disease and suffered heavy losses, with Liu himself among the dead.[33] This denouement was almost to be expected. Until quite recent times

armies operating in all climes were vulnerable to epidemic disease, but the danger was especially great when soldiers from temperate areas moved south into the tropics and came into contact with a lush profusion of unfamiliar microbes.

In the north, Sui hegemony was resisted by the Korean kingdom of Koguryo. This state had its capital at Pyongyang in the northern part of the Korean peninsula, and extended westward into southern Manchuria as far as the Liao River. It shared the peninsula with the kingdoms of Paekche in the southwest (including everything from today's Kwangju almost up to Seoul) and Silla in the southeast around modern Pusan. Both Koguryo and Paekche had been founded in the fourth century by warlike tribes moving down from Manchuria.[34] Koguryo showed scant respect for Sui authority; early in 598, its king joined forces with the Malgal, a Tungusic people from eastern Manchuria, to raid Sui territory west of the Liao River. This move infuriated Emperor Wen, who ordered an invasion of Koguryo by forces totalling 300,000 men. The land army marched from Linyuguan, near today's Qinhuangdao, Hebei, on August 4, but soon encountered torrential rains that interfered with the transport of provisions to the troops. Food supplies ran short, sickness broke out, and the army was withdrawn at the end of October, having suffered huge losses and accomplished nothing. A Sui fleet sailing from the Shandong peninsula to attack Pyongyang fared no better; it encountered storms in the Yellow Sea and many of the vessels were lost.[35] The entire operation seems to have been planned in complete ignorance of the climate and seasonal weather patterns of southern Manchuria, where the rainy season of July and August turned roads to mire and could bring military operations to a standstill.[36] In spite of this spectacular show of ineptitude, the king of Koguryo was alarmed enough to apologize to Emperor Wen, who readily accepted this face-saving gesture and made no further moves against the Korean kingdom for the remainder of his reign.

Relations between Sui and Koguryo took a turn for the worse in 607, when Emperor Yang discovered that the Koreans had been engaged in secret negotiations with the Eastern Turks. After the king of Koguryo refused his summons to appear in person at the Sui court, Emperor Yang began to make deliberate preparations for another northeastern campaign. "The authority of the Central Kingdom had been flouted, and sooner or later the response would have to be the application of overwhelming force against the miscreant."[37] War preparations moved into high gear toward the end of 610, when Emperor Yang imposed a new tax on the wealthy families of the empire in order to purchase horses for the army. On April 14, 611, he officially decreed that there would be a punitive expedition against Koguryo. Construction of a

fleet of 300 seagoing vessels began at Donglai on the northern side of the Shandong peninsula, and 10,000 watermen were brought up from the Yangzi and Huai valleys to crew the fleet, along with 30,000 javelin-men – probably aborigines – from Lingnan in the far south and 30,000 crossbowmen. On June 1 the emperor himself arrived at Zhuo commandery, just south of today's Beijing, which would be the principal jumping-off point for the Sui land army.[38] This location was the northeastern terminus of the Yongji canal, constructed in 608–9, which joined the Yellow River near Liyang. Only a few miles upriver from Liyang was the entrance of the Tongji canal, begun in 605, which ran southeastward across the Henan plain to connect with the Huai River and the Yangzi. This transportation system linking the richest and most populous parts of the empire with the northeastern frontier region greatly facilitated the buildup of military resources for the Koguryo campaign, and the need to wait for its completion may help to explain the rather long hiatus between the original *casus belli* and the real commencement of war preparations.[39]

All through the seventh year of the "Great Enterprise" reign period of Emperor Yang of Sui, the year known in the West as AD 611, troops, horses, grain, and military equipment poured into Zhuo commandery. The seventh-century *History of the Sui Dynasty* and Sima Guang's eleventh-century *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* report that the logistical preparations were on a grand scale. Craftsmen in Henan and the lower Yangzi region were ordered to produce 50,000 carts to convey clothing, armor, and tents. The common people of Henan and Hebei were mobilized to "provide for the needs of the army," and boats and crews were requisitioned from the south to transport grain supplies from the huge state granaries at Liyang and Luokou (near Luoyang) up to Zhuo commandery. A reported 600,000 men were conscripted to convey "deer carts," each crewed by two men and laden with 180 liters of grain, to forward supply bases at Luhe garrison (near today's Jinzhou) and Huaiyuan garrison (close to the Liao River), more than 250 miles northeast of Zhuo commandery.[40] These "deer carts" were really Chinese wheelbarrows, differing from the Western variety in that the wheel is located directly in the center and bears most of the weight, permitting a much heavier load. As Joseph Needham, the great historian of Chinese science and technology, pointed out, the Chinese wheelbarrow design was "conceived as a substitute for a pack animal." Tradition has it that the first such contraption was devised by the great Three Kingdoms strategist Zhuge Liang expressly for the purpose of supplying his troops in the early years of the third century, though there is ample evidence that single-wheel carriers were already in use well before his time.[41]

The troops who gathered at Zhuo commandery included both the men of the "soaring hawk regimental headquarters" (*yingyang fu*) and male commoners, mostly farmers, called up for temporary military service as an extension of their corvée obligation. We have no way of knowing what percentage of the total force fell into each of these categories, though there are reports that Emperor Yang established a large number of new regimental headquarters (*fu*) on the North China Plain in the years immediately preceding the Korean expedition.[42] The host gathering at Zhuo commandery also included some units that belonged to neither category, such as the 500 Turkish horsemen following Chuluo Qaghan, a Western Turk leader who had taken refuge at the Sui court.[43] Its largest portion was organized into twenty-four "armies," each under the command of a "major-general" and with apparently identical organization. The nucleus of each army was forty companies (*dui*) of heavy cavalry. These companies were supposed to number 100 men, with ten companies forming a battalion (*tuan*). Each army had eighty companies of infantry, presumably also 100 strong, organized into four battalions of twenty companies. In addition, an army had a baggage train accompanied by an unspecified number of "dispersed" soldiers that was also organized into four battalions, plus a single company of 200 mounted archers who seem to have been under the direct command of the major-general himself, perhaps to serve as scouts.[44] To these twenty-four armies must be added the "six armies of the Son of Heaven" that accompanied the emperor into the field, making a grand total of thirty armies. With Emperor Yang would travel a mobile replica of his government from the capital city of Daxingcheng (Chang'an), with all the major administrative agencies represented. The many civil officials present at Zhou commandery had been ordered to discard their flowing robes and dress in military attire for ease of movement in the field.[45]

The *History of the Sui Dynasty*, written when the campaign was still a living memory, offers a description of the dress and equipment of the soldiers of the twenty-four armies. Different units were carefully distinguished by banners and differences in uniform colors and equipment. The first cavalry battalion of each army wore "bright-brilliant" (*mingguang*) armor joined with dark green (*qing*) cords; they had iron horse armor with dark green tassels and were distinguished by lion banners.[46] The second battalion wore armor of vermillion leather joined with deep red cords; its horse armor had an "animal pattern" and red tassels, and the unit flag depicted a panther-like beast. The third and fourth battalions, too, had their distinguishing colors. The infantry were provided with banners, one for each company, and of a different color for each battalion of the army. Each army had not one but two military bands. The first, of ninety-four

pieces, consisted mainly of different types of drums, while the second, of thirty-seven pieces, included bells, flutes, whistles, and horns.[47] Given the large size of the Sui expeditionary force and the relatively short time in which it was assembled, one may reasonably question whether all of the soldiers in all of the armies were really outfitted in accordance with such a high and uniform standard. If they are not entirely fanciful, this and other passages may represent the plans and intentions of the Sui leaders rather than what was actually accomplished.

The *History of the Sui Dynasty* reports that the total strength of the forces mobilized for the expedition against Koguryo was 1,133,800 combat troops, with approximately twice that number serving in logistical support roles.[48] These figures are open to question on several grounds. First, the number of combat troops is difficult to reconcile with the organizational structure and unit strengths outlined above. Emperor Yang's host at Zhuo commandery consisted of thirty armies, each composed of 4000 cavalry and 8000 infantry plus musicians, mounted archers, and an unspecified number of personnel attached to the baggage train; since this last group was also organized into four battalions, it seems likely that it did not greatly exceed 8000 men. The strength of each would then have been in the neighborhood of 20,000, making a total of 600,000. When the men who appear to have been assigned to the fleet are added to this figure, we are left with a grand total of 670,000.[49] The figures reported in the *History of the Sui Dynasty* are doubly suspect because they represent such a high proportion of the registered population of the Sui empire recorded in 609:46,019,956 individuals of all ages, both male and female.[50] One adult male from every forty-one registered individuals would have been called to serve as a combat soldier for this campaign, and if we include the men reportedly summoned as corvée laborers to transport grain from one place to another, the ratio rises to an incredible one in fourteen. In an agricultural society where many lived at or near the subsistence level, the price of putting too many farmers into the army would have been a sharp drop in agricultural output leading to the inability to feed the large armies thus created. In the late Roman empire, the ratio of men serving in the army to overall population (the "military participation ratio" – MPR – to use the term coined by the sociologist Stanislav Andreski) was probably in the neighborhood of 1:100. In England in 1298 the ratio was 1:139; in 1710 it was 1:150 in England and 1:66 in France. Ratios higher than this were sometimes achieved, but this was usually accomplished by the mobilization of militia forces for very short periods and was done most easily in relatively simple, undifferentiated societies where every adult male was expected to serve as a soldier when necessary and was equipped

with the skills to do so effectively.[51]

In the case of Emperor Yang's army of 612, there is a special reason why the number of troops may be exaggerated. The official history of the Sui dynasty was written by scholars in the service of the succeeding Tang dynasty, men who had a strong interest in portraying Emperor Yang as a "bad last emperor" whose downfall reflected the will of Heaven.[52] By adding to the size of his army, they would also have increased the apparent magnitude of his eventual failure and the aura of cosmic retribution that surrounded it. Even if the early Tang historians did not "cook the books" in this way, it is likely that the figure of 1,133,800 combat soldiers given in the *History of the Sui Dynasty* represents the total number of men that the government *summoned* for service in 611, rather than the number that actually arrived at Zhuo commandery and Donglai and then participated in the campaign against Koguryo the following year. An army roughly half this size, the figure suggested by addition of the reported strengths of the contingents that made up the Sui host, is much more plausible and is also in line with the reported size of the Sui force that moved against Chen in 588. Such a force would have been much too large to march, camp, and fight together as a single army, but, as we have seen, the masses gathered at Zhuo commandery were divided into thirty much more manageable "armies" – each roughly the size of a Napoleonic *corps d'armée* – that would march separately and occupy separate camps.[53]

On February 8, 612, Emperor Yang ordered the lead elements of his army to begin their march eastward from Zhuo commandery.[54] The timing of the beginning of the campaign, and the elaborate preparations made over the course of the preceding year, indicates that the emperor and his advisors had drawn the appropriate conclusions from Emperor Wen's failure of 598 and were determined to set their forces in motion as early in the year as the weather permitted in order to provide adequate time to reduce Koguryo's border fortresses before the arrival of the summer rains.

About the time that his troops were setting out, Emperor Yang conducted a series of elaborate ceremonies near his palace at Zhuo commandery.[55] The Chinese "Son of Heaven" was not simply a political leader but also a sacral ruler, the ritual intermediary between human society, nature, and the cosmos, and war was regarded as a significant disruption of the natural order that called for special observances. This was especially true when the emperor himself set out on campaign. On this occasion Emperor Yang had an altar of the soil (*she*) constructed on the bank of the Sanggan River and, after a period of seclusion and abstinence, he dressed in special vestments and rode to the altar in a carriage of state to perform the *yi* sacrifice.

Then, on another day and at another location south of his palace, he performed the *lei* ceremony, in which he made offerings of meat, jade, and silk to the Lord-on-High (Shang Di). The meat was distributed to the soldiers, and the other items burned on a great pyre.[56] The final imperial ceremony, a burnt offering to Ma Zu, the original progenitor of horses (identified with four stars in the constellation Scorpio sometimes called the "Heavenly Team"), was conducted at an altar erected to the north of the commandery city.[57] A further recognition of the importance of the equine contribution to military undertakings occurred that same day, when the emperor had functionaries make additional sacrifices to the horse spirit Ma Bu and the first domesticator of horses. During the course of the campaign the emperor would arrange for offerings to be made to the spirits of the mountains and rivers that his army passed, and the ritual code also stipulated another round of ceremonies to follow the ruler's victorious return from the field.[58]

The main Sui army moved eastward through the sparsely-populated mountains and plains of southeastern Manchuria, reaching the Liao River on April 19, 612. Here it was confronted by Koguryo troops drawn up on the east side of the stream. An initial attempt to construct three pontoon bridges failed because the bridges were just a little too short and Sui troops trying to struggle the rest of the way through the water were at a terrible disadvantage vis-à-vis the defenders of the eastern bank. A second attempt several days later was a success, however, and the main Sui army was able to cross to the opposite side and inflict a severe defeat on the enemy forces. Emperor Yang moved forward to besiege Ryotongsong (Liaodongcheng, near modern Liaoyang city), Koguryo's principal fortress in the valley of the Liao River. While these events were transpiring on land, the Sui fleet under Lai Huer set sail from Donglai, entered the estuary of the Taedong River, and reached a point about twenty miles downstream from Pyongyang by the middle of July. After an initial victory, Lai was emboldened to press on to the Koguryo capital, rejecting advice from his second-incommand that he should wait for the arrival of the Sui land army in order to make a concerted attack. Lai led 40,000 men up to Pyongyang, where the Korean defenders feigned defeat in a battle outside the city and lured the Sui troops into the outer walls in pursuit. As they scattered to seize plunder and captives, Lai's men were attacked by a fresh Korean force that had been concealed in an empty Buddhist temple and were driven back to their ships with heavy losses. After this unpleasant experience Lai kept his remaining forces in a secure position on the coast southeast of Pyongyang, where they would not find it easy to make contact with other Sui armies approaching from the north.[59]

Along the Liao River several hundred miles to the northwest, Ryotongsong and the other Koguryo fortresses held firm against Sui attack. Emperor Yang, who was no doubt keenly aware that the campaigning season was slipping away, decided to send nine of his thirty armies directly to Pyongyang without waiting for the fall of the fortresses. The soldiers were issued 100 days' supply of grain for the operation from the forward depots at the Luhe and Huaiyuan garrisons, but by the time they reached the Yalu River most of their provisions had either been consumed or discarded. In this case the distance to be covered exceeded the carrying capacity of the troops; when extra-large loads of grain were added to the shields, armor, weapons, clothing, tents, and other military equipment with which the soldiers were already burdened, the entire load came to more than a man could carry. Threatened with decapitation if they threw away any of the grain, the troops took to burying it inside their tents during the night.[60]

A disagreement arose between the Sui generals when the army reached the Yalu River. One of the army commanders, Yuwen Shu, argued that the supply situation necessitated a withdrawal, but Yu Zhongsheng, who had been placed in overall command of the strike force by Emperor Yang, insisted on driving forward to Pyongyang in spite of the shortage of food. In this he was encouraged by Korean commanders who deliberately fought losing skirmishes in order to draw him in deeper. Yu penetrated to within ten miles of the enemy's capital, but here the hungry Sui army was daunted by the strength of the city's defenses and failed to make contact with Lai Huer on the other side of Pyongyang, whose ships were loaded with grain precisely for the purpose of reprovisioning the Sui land forces at this juncture. The defenders refused to join battle with them, and there was apparently little food to be gleaned from the Korean countryside. The Sui army soon began to retreat northward in a square formation, under almost constant harassment from the Koreans. It reached the Sa River (today's Ch'ongch'on River), about midway between Pyongyang and the Yalu, in the second half of August. There, just as the army was in the midst of its crossing, the units remaining on the south bank were hit by a strong Korean attack. Most of the Sui force collapsed in a panic-stricken rout, with some elements (no doubt cavalry) reaching the Yalu River in the space of a single day and night. The vast majority of the troops of the nine armies that had been sent across the Yalu were lost.[61]

On August 27, almost immediately after receiving word of the debacle at the Sa River, Emperor Yang ordered what remained of his army to withdraw from the Liao frontier. He had nothing to show for his efforts beyond the acquisition of a single Koguryo outpost on the

western side of the Liao River.[62] The cost included not only the loss of tens of thousands of soldiers, but also unrest and instability within the Sui empire itself. In the summer of 611, during the preparations for the Korean campaign, a large area along the lower reaches of the Yellow River had been inundated by flooding, and in 612 the same region was hit by drought and epidemic disease. It was against this background that troops were mobilized and grain, animals, and labor service exacted from the population. The government's requisitioning drove the already high price of grain even higher, and the great distance between Hebei and the Liao River meant that large numbers of farmers, with their draft animals and carts, were removed from their homes and fields for a much longer period than the standard annual exaction for corvée labor. Many did not return at all. And the burden was made even heavier when men were punished for failing to meet expectations that were already unrealistic; it was reported, for example, that tranport laborers who delivered spoiled grain were required to make good the loss at their own expense.[63] Many of the men called up by the state as soldiers or laborers never arrived at Zhuo commandery or the Liao River, but deserted and turned to banditry, swelling the population of certain relatively inaccessible tracts of hill country, forest, and wasteland that had long been the haunt of fugitives and outlaws.[64] Among these areas were the Wagang hills in Dong commandery, the "Long White Mountain" in Qi commandery south of the Yellow River, and the Douzikang salt marshes on the north side of the river in Bohai commandery. In 611 Dou Jiande, a relatively wealthy and locally influential farmer of Zhangnan county near the Yongji Canal in Qinghe commandery, was put in a charge of a group of 200 local men conscripted for the Korean expedition. Instead of proceding to Zhuo commandery, Dou led his charges to take refuge in the Gaojibo, a marshy area to the west of Zhangnan. There he joined forces with an existing bandit gang that was already more than a thousand strong, and eventually became a major threat to Sui authority in central Hebei.[65] In 611 and 612 there were numerous reports of unrest and banditry in the areas that had been devastated by the Yellow River flood and most severely affected by the demands of the Korean expedition. By the spring of 613, disorders had been reported in the commanderies of Beihai, Qinghe, Pingyuan, Hejian, Bohai, Jiyin, Jibei, Lingwu, and Qi.[66] With the exception of Lingwu in the far northwest, all of these locations lay along the Yongji Canal or the lower course of the Yellow River.

The spreading disorder notwithstanding, Emperor Yang resolved to renew the campaign against Koguryo in the new year. On January 28, 613, he issued an edict ordering the troops of the empire to gather again at Zhuo commandery. Efforts were made to better prepare for

the logistical support of the forces in Manchuria. A new forward supply base was established on the west side of the Liao River, and grain was moved by ship from the large state granaries near Luoyang down the Yellow River and across the Gulf of Bohai to the small port of Wanghaidun on the Manchurian coast.[67] In recognition of the opportunities that were lost in 612 when all the army commanders attacking Ryotongsoong had been required to clear their moves with the emperor in advance, the generals were now to be allowed much greater scope for autonomous decisionmaking.[68] There was also a change in the composition of the Sui army. Perhaps because he was disappointed with the performance of his troops in 612, Emperor Yang ordered the recruitment of a new class of soldier for the 613 campaign. Designated as *xiaoguo* – or "brave and determined" warriors – these troops were organized into locally based units along much the same lines as the men of the existing "soaring hawk regimental headquarters." Unlike the *fubing* of the older regiments who were by now mostly men designated by the state rather than volunteers, the *xiaoguo* were raised by voluntary recruitment. In some ways these units may be understood as a throwback to the local elite forces formerly recruited by Western Wei and Northern Zhou; many of the soldiers seem to have been ambitious men, with a modicum of wealth, power, and influence in their home communities, who had held no government office in the past but hoped to rise on the basis of military merit and perhaps even catch the eye of the emperor himself. In some cases, local strongmen brought their personal followers with them into the *xiaoguo* units. The direct connection of the *xiaoguo* with the emperor was underlined by the subordination of their regiments to the imperial guard headquarters that was responsible for supervising the elite corps of imperial bodyguards as opposed to the ordinary *fubing*.[69] In spite of all of these efforts to strengthen morale, troop quality, command control, and logistical support, there were ominous signs that the army of 613 was not as well provided for as the one that had marched the year before: due to a shortage of horses, units were authorized to use donkeys in place of the usual pack horses.[70]

Emperor Yang arrived at his advanced base on the Liao River on March 30, 613, and crossed to the east bank on May 21. The plan of campaign was essentially the same as in 612. The main army, accompanied by the emperor himself, laid siege to Ryotongsong, while a subsidiary column attacked the fortress of Sinsong (Xincheng), farther to the north near today's Fushun. Another force under generals Yuwen Shu and Yang Yichen was sent toward Pyongyang, though it is not clear whether they were instructed to move forward more cautiously than Yu Zhongsheng had in the previous year. Lai Huer was again ordered to sail from Donglai and threaten Pyongyang from the

seaward side. Perhaps because of the need to coordinate his movements with those of the land army, he had not yet sailed as of the end of June.[71] Ryotongsong proved no easier to capture than in 612. This time we are told that the Sui forces attacked day and night from all four directions, both tunneling under the walls and employing battering rams and wheeled assault vehicles mounting segmented, extensible ladders. The Korean defenders were able to counter all of these moves, however, and Emperor Yang eventually turned to building a great earthen ramp up to the top of the city wall, with eight-wheeled wooden overlook towers positioned alongside so that Sui archers could sweep the wall top in preparation for the great assault. At this point, when the siege had been underway for nearly two months, word arrived that Yang Su's son Yang Xuangan, who had been stationed at Liyang on the Yongji Canal to supervise the transport of supplies, had rebelled against Emperor Yang. The rising began on June 25, but it took until July 20 for the news to reach the imperial camp outside Ryotongsong.[72]

Yang Xuangan was an ambitious man with reason to dislike the emperor, who had compelled his father to take poison several years earlier. Emperor Yang's defeat in the campaign of 612 apparently encouraged him to believe that Heaven had withdrawn its mandate from the Sui royal house, and the emperor's absence in the remote northeast seemed to offer a golden opportunity. Even before he went into open rebellion, Yang had been delaying the shipment of supplies northward through Hebei on the pretext that bandit activity had blocked traffic on the Yongji Canal.[73] By late June he was confident enough to arm the transport workers under his control at Liyang, rally other disaffected elements, and march on Luoyang, the secondary capital of the empire. The news of Yang's rising brought the Koguryo campaign of 613 to an abrupt end. The emperor withdrew his army from before Ryotongsong under cover of darkness, leaving behind mountains of equipment in his abandoned camp. Fearing a trap, the Koreans waited two days before setting out in pursuit, and even then they followed the much larger Sui army at a respectful distance and limited themselves to the easiest pickings, massacring several thousand Sui stragglers at the Liao River crossing. The Sui troops who had been gathered at Donglai for another sea voyage to Korea were instead dispatched in the direction of Luoyang.[74]

Although Yang was able to defeat a Sui force that attempted to block his path to the "eastern capital" of Luoyang, the city itself defied his efforts to take it. After several fruitless weeks, and with Sui armies converging from several directions, Yang raised the siege of Luoyang in early August and moved westward toward Guanzhong in what was more a flight than an advance. His army was overtaken and crushed

by Sui pursuers, and Yang himself was killed.[75] The entire affair had lasted less than two months, but the consequences were dire. They were not limited to the abrupt termination of the 613 campaign against Koguryo. Yang Xuangan was the first member of the ruling circle of powerful northwestern families to turn against the Sui, and his rebellion was on a much larger scale – and much more threatening to the dynasty – than any of the other outbreaks that had occurred thus far. His action appears to have inspired a considerable number of secondary risings in many different regions, and it was at this time that the tide of rebellion began to spread beyond the areas in Henan and Hebei that had been most adversely affected by flood, drought, famine, and the exactions for the Koguryo campaigns. In the late summer and autumn of 613, several new revolts broke out in the lower Yangzi region, Zhejiang, and Guangdong, and before the end of year there were also risings in the Huai valley and in the western part of Guanzhong, where a rebel leader had the temerity to proclaim himself emperor.[76] Some of these rebellions were crushed, but new disturbances continued to occur and the harried imperial forces were unable to reestablish order across vast expanses of territory.

Against this backdrop of spreading chaos, Emperor Yang remained obsessed with the need to bring distant Koguryo to heel. On April 4, 614, he ordered the mobilization of troops for a third campaign. This time, however, many of the soldiers were not able to make their way to the rendezvous point on schedule – which may explain why the emperor did not reach the Liao River until August 27, four months after his arrival at Zhuo commandery. By this time it was much too late in the season to lay siege to the Korean fortresses east of the Liao. A more effective blow, however, was struck by Lai Huer, who had again crossed the Gulf of Bohai to the Korean coast. He defeated an enemy army and advanced to threaten Pyongyang, prompting the king of Koguryo to sue for peace and hand over a Sui general – an associate of Yang Xuangan – who had defected the year before.[77] It was clear that the king was simply playing for time, but his gesture made it possible for Emperor Yang to declare victory and withdraw his army from the Liao frontier before the onset of winter. When the Korean king failed to come to the Sui court as he had been commanded to do, the emperor ordered preparations for another campaign in 615. By this time, however, the situation in the Sui empire had degenerated to such an extent that further foreign adventures were out of the question.[78] In the summer of 615 Emperor Yang's prestige suffered yet another devastating blow when, in the course of an effort to "show the flag" on the northern frontier, he was surrounded for a month at the town of Yanmen by the now-hostile Eastern Turks. In 616 he withdrew to Jiangdu in the Yangzi valley as disorder continued to

reign in the north, and it was there that he met his end at the hands of disaffected guardsmen (*xiaoguo*) in the spring of 618.

Emperor Yang's downfall was closely linked to the Korean campaigns, which imposed additional heavy burdens on regions already suffering from floods, drought, famine, and epidemic disease, and thereby fanned the flames of peasant unrest, banditry, and rebellion. The emperor's continuing fixation on the punishment of Koguryo greatly impeded his government's capacity to deal with the disorders. The two most important tools of pacification were military power and the distribution of relief grain. Yet the majority of the empire's soldiers were sent against Koguryo year after year, while the wheat, rice, and millet that filled the great state granaries located at key nodes along the water transportation network were hoarded for the purpose of feeding the soldiers fighting in the northeast. Perhaps most damaging of all, however, was the blow to the emperor's prestige. Chinese emperors rarely led their armies in person. When the monarch organized a military undertaking on such a massive scale and took the field himself at the head of his army, he could not afford to fail; his defeat would be a signal to all the ambitious men of the empire that he was vulnerable, that he had lost Heaven's mandate and was destined to fall. At least one of Emperor Yang's officials tried to dissuade him from accompanying the army for precisely this reason.[79]

Historians have pointed to many reasons for the failure of the Sui campaigns against Koguryo.[80] The greatest emphasis has been given to the short campaigning season in southern Manchuria, where military operations were all but impossible during the cold months from October to March and could also be brought to a halt by the rains of July and August. In the space of only about four months, the Chinese armies had to cover hundreds of miles and overcome the strong fortresses that Koguryo had established on the east side of the Liao River. The coordination of the Sui forces over great distances was also a serious problem, most notably in 612 when the land army and the fleet failed to make contact in the vicinity of Pyongyang. And the huge size of the Sui army must be considered a source of weakness as well as strength, since it slowed the army's movements, contributed to difficulties of command and control, and increased the burden on the logistical system to the breaking point.[81]

Problems of logistics lay at the heart of the Sui failure. The attempt to capture Pyongyang in 612 was unsuccessful not because the Sui army was absolutely unable to penetrate the screen of fortresses east of the Liao River, but because that army could not be fed once it had advanced into the deep interior of Koguryo. There was little or nothing to be found locally (the Koreans having presumably gathered their grain in the walled cities and fortresses), the Sui troops were

separated from their supply bases by mountains, rivers, hostile inhabitants, and hundreds of miles of bad roads, and the soldiers could not carry enough grain to sustain themselves in the field for any length of time. Again and again, Sui military planners seem to have underestimated the distances to be covered, while overestimating the speed at which they could cover them and the carrying capacity of their forces.[82] A case in point is the story of the thousands of two-man wheelbarrows ("deer carts") that were dispatched to transport grain from Zhuo commandery to the forward supply bases near the Liao River in 611. Each vehicle was loaded with 180 liters of grain, enough to feed its crew for seventy-five days. Moving through rugged, sparsely populated country, the wheelbarrow-men took much longer than expected to cover the 400 miles to the Liao River; many of them ended up consuming all or most of the grain they were carrying and, fearing punishment, absconded to join the swelling ranks of the outlaw bands.[83] In this case, the miscalculation not only contributed to the failure of the Sui campaign, but also helped to fan the flames of popular unrest. No Chinese ruler could be confident of subjugating Koguryo unless and until he found reasonable solutions to the daunting logistical problems of campaigning in such difficult country so far from home.

Notes

1 For Emperor Wen's efforts to promote imperial unity and ideological legitimation, see Arthur F. Wright, "The Formation of Sui Ideology, 581–604," in John K. Fairbank (ed.), *Chinese Thought and Institutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 71–104, and idem, *The Sui Dynasty*, chs. 4 and 5.

2 *Sui shu*, ch. 2, pp. 34–5.

3 *Sui shu*, ch. 2, pp. 39, 43. Wright, "The Sui Dynasty," p. 102.

4 This analysis follows that of Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, pp. 99, 104–7.

5 Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, pp. 111–12, 114–15.

6 Kikuchi Hideo, "Fuhei seido no tenkai," in *Iwanami koza: Sekai rekishi*, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1970), pp. 415–16.

7 Zhang Guogang, "Tangdai fubing yuanyuan yu fanyi," *Lishi yanjiu*, 1989, No. 6, pp. 150–1.

8 Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, pp. 110, 119.

9 For the Byzantine themes, see Haldon, *Warfare, State, and Society in the Byzantine World, 565–1204*, pp. 71–85, and Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army, 284–1081*, pp. 21–7.

10 Kegasawa Yasunori, "Zui Yodai ki no fuhei sei o meguru ichi kosatsu," in *Ritsuryosei: Chuogoku, Chosen no ho to kokka* (Tokyo: Kyuoko shoin, 1986), pp. 453–5, 470.

11 *Sui shu*, ch. 28, pp. 793–4; Kikuchi Hideo, "To setsushofu no bunpu mondai ni kansuru ichi kaishaku," pp. 148–9.

12 Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, pp. 117–18.

13 Kegasawa, "Zui Yodai ki no fuhei sei o meguru ichi kosatsu," pp. 473–5.

14 *Sui shu*, ch. 64, pp. 1518–19.

15 Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, p. 102.

16 *Sui shu*, ch. 64, p. 1520.

17 *Sui shu*, ch. 64, p. 1509.

18 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 166, p. 5130; Li Baiyao, *Bei Qi shu*, ch. 4, p. 63. The eastern state had earlier built walls against the Ruoruan (*Bei Qi shu*, ch. 2, p. 22) and Western Wei as well (*Bei Qi shu*, ch. 4, p. 56). Northern Wei had also engaged in wall-building in the first half of the fifth century; see *Wei shu*, ch. 3, p. 63, and ch. 4B, p. 101.

19 Waldron, *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth*, pp. 26–7. This work challenges the

entrenched notion that there was a single, massive Great Wall with an uninterrupted existence from the third century BC to the present.

20 *Sui shu*, ch. 84, p. 1865.

21 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 175, pp. 5458–9; *Sui shu*, ch. 84, p. 1866.

22 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 175, p. 5463, 5466.

23 *Sui shu*, ch. 1, pp. 15, 23, 25.

24 Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier*, p. 133.

25 *Sui shu*, ch. 84, pp. 1868–9; Sinor, "The Establishment and Dissolution of the Türk Empire," pp. 305–6.

26 *Sui shu*, ch. 84, pp. 1872–3.

27 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 180, pp. 5621–2.

28 For more on Chinese heavy cavalry and armor, see Albert E. Dien, "A Study of Early Chinese Armor," *Artibus Asiae*, 43 (1982), pp. 5–66; and Yang Hong, *Zhongguo gu bingqi luncong*, especially pp. 103–12.

29 For a discussion of steppe logistics, see John Masson Smith, Jr., "Ayn Jaoluot: Mamluok Success or Mongol Failure?" *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 44.2 (December 1984), especially pp. 331–9.

30 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 178, p. 5564. Also see ch. 175, p. 5463.

31 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 180, p. 5631.

32 Wright, "The Sui Dynasty," pp. 107, 109.

33 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 180, p. 5619.

34 Korean histories have traditionally placed the founding of these kingdoms several centuries earlier, but modern scholarship points to the fourth century. See Gina L. Barnes, *The Rise of Civilization in East Asia: The Archaeology of China, Korea and Japan* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), p. 222, and Gari Ledyard, "Galloping Along with the Horseriders: Looking for the Founders of Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 1.2 (Spring 1975), pp. 217–54.

35 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 178, pp. 5560–2.

36 Chen Yinke, *Tangdai zhengzhi shi shulun gao* (Beijing: Sanlian, 1956), p. 140. Shenyang receives nearly half its annual rainfall of 28 inches in the two months of July and August; see *People's Republic of China Atlas* (N.p.: U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 1971), pp. 54–5.

37 Wright, "The Sui Dynasty," p. 142.

38 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, pp. 5653–4; *Sui shu*, ch. 24, pp. 686–7.

39 For more information on the Sui canal system, see Wright, "The Sui Dynasty," pp. 134–7, 144.

40 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, pp. 5654–6. For the location of the two garrisons, see Tan Qixiang, *Zhongguo lishi dituji*, vol. 5, maps 19–20.

41 Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 4: *Physics and Physical Technology*, pt. 2: *Mechanical Engineering*, pp. 260–3; the quote is from pp. 270–1.

42 Asami Naoichiro emphasizes the role of the conscripts in his "Yodai no dai ichi ji Kokuri enseigun: sono kibo to heishu," *Toyoshi kenkyuo*, 44.1 (June 1985), pp. 23–44, while Kegasawa Yasunori stresses the centrality of the "troops from the headquarters" (*fubing*) in his "Gyokasei ko," *Oryo shigaku*, 11 (1986), pp. 61–63. With regard to the creation of new regiments, see Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, p. 5655, and *Sui shu*, ch. 24, p. 686.

43 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, p. 5658.

44 *Sui shu*, ch. 8, pp. 160–1; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, pp. 5659–60. Asami ("Yodai no dai ichi ji Kokuri enseigun," p. 27) suggests that the infantry companies were 200 strong, but this is little more than a guess.

45 *Sui shu*, ch. 8, p. 162; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, pp. 5652, 5660.

46 *Sui shu*, ch. 8, p. 160. Albert E. Dien identifies the *mingguang* as armor made from decarburized steel; see his "Study of Early Chinese Armor," p. 16. Chinese archeologists, however, tend to associate the term with a different type that Dien prefers to call placque armor.

47 *Sui shu*, ch. 8, pp. 160–1. Underneath the armor, yellow was the standard color for Sui military dress; see Peter A. Boodberg, "Marginalia to the History of the Northern Dynasties," in *Selected Works of Peter A. Boodberg*, comp. Alvin P. Cohen (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), p. 268.

48 *Sui shu*, ch. 4, p. 81.

49 Working from the assumption that each infantry company was 200 strong, and placing great emphasis on one report that two armies together totalled 50,000 men, Asami comes out with 750,000 – plus another 50,000 for the fleet. This is still well below 1,133,800. See "Yodai no dai ichi ji Kokuri enseigun," pp. 27–8.

50 *Sui shu*, ch. 29, p. 808.

51 Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, pp. 12, 117, 307. For the definition of MPR, see Stanislav Andreski, *Military Organization and Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), p. 33.

52 See Wright, "Sui Yang-Ti: Personality and Stereotype," pp. 47–76.

53 For a more thorough discussion of these issues, see Graff, "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition," pp. 46–9.

54 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, p. 5659.

55 These are described in *Sui shu*, ch. 8, p. 160.

56 This appears to have been very similar to the sacrifice to Shang Di described in a Tang ritual text from the first half of the eighth century. See Howard J. Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbol in the Legitimation of the T'ang Dynasty* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 118–20.

57 For Ma Zu, see the entry in Morohashi Tetsuji, *Dai Kan Wa jiten* (Tokyo: Taishuokan, 1966). The "Heavenly Team" was an alternative name for Fang, the fourth of the twenty-eight "lunar mansions" (*xiu*) of traditional Chinese astronomy; see Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 3: *Mathematics and the Sciences of the Heavens and the Earth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), p. 235 and fig. 94 opposite p. 250.

58 *Sui shu*, ch. 8, pp. 159–60. When the emperor left his capital to begin a military campaign and returned to it after the campaign was over, there were rites in the imperial ancestral temple.

59 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, pp. 5661–3.

60 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, pp. 5663–4.

61 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, pp. 5664–6. For the intended role of the Sui fleet in feeding the land army near Pyongyang, see *Sui shu*, ch. 24, pp. 687–8.

62 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, p. 5666.

63 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, pp. 5654, 5656, 5667; *Sui shu*, ch. 24, p. 688.

64 Huang Huixian, "Sui mo nongmin qiyi wuzhuang qianxi," in *Tang shi yanjiuhui lunwenji* (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 1983), pp. 175–6.

65 Liu Xu et al., *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 54, pp. 2234–5; Ouyang Xiu, *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 85, pp. 3696–7; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, pp. 5656–67; Hu Rulei, "Lue lun Li Mi," in *Zhongguo nongmin zhanzheng shi yanjiu*, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1982), p. 55.

66 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 182, pp. 5669–70; Woodbridge Bingham, *The Founding of the T'ang Dynasty* (rpt. New York: Octagon Books, 1970), pp. 43, 130–1.

67 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, p. 5666; ch. 182, p. 5668.

68 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, p. 5662; ch. 182, p. 5671.

69 For the *xiaoguo*, see Kegasawa, "Gyokasei ko," especially pp. 64–7 and 75–7. Kegasawa believes that their total number eventually reached 100,000 to 150,000 men.

70 *Sui shu*, ch. 24, p. 688.

71 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 182, pp. 5669–72.

72 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 182, pp. 5671, 5672, 5676–7.

73 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 182, pp. 5672–3.

74 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 182, pp. 5676–8.

75 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 182, pp. 5678–81.

76 Bingham, *The Founding of the T'ang Dynasty*, pp. 45, 131–2.

77 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 182, pp. 5689–91.

78 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 182, pp. 5691–2; Wright, "The Sui Dynasty," p. 146.

79 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, p. 5659.

80 Summaries are offered in Wright, "The Sui Dynasty," pp. 145–7 and John Charles Jamieson, "The Samguk Sagi and the Unification Wars" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1969), pp. 33–4. For in-depth analyses, see Chen Yinke, *Tangdai zhengzhi shi shulun gao*, p. 140, and Li Tse-fen, *Sui Tang Wudai lishi lunwenji*, pp. 217, 227–8.

81 Li Tse-fen, a former military officer, is especially sensitive to the disadvantages of large numbers; see his *Sui Tang Wudai lishi lunwenji*, p. 217. For a general discussion of the impact of numbers on speed and maneuverability, see Delbrück, *Numbers in History*; for the logistics of premodern warfare, see Donald W. Engels, *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), especially pp. 18–22, and the articles by Walter E. Kaegi and Bernard S. Bachrach in John A. Lynn (ed.), *Feeding Mars: Logistics in Western Warfare from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1993), pp. 39–78.

82 See Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 182, p. 5669.

83 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, p. 5656. Grain consumption is figured at the rate of two *sheng* (approximately 1.2 liters) per man/day, the standard ration according to an eighth-century military handbook; see Li Quan, *Taibai yinjing*, pp. 556, 558. The distance of 400 miles is as the crow flies; Tang sources indicate that more than 700 miles of *road* separated Zhuo commandery from Xincheng on the Liao River; see *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 39, pp. 1516, 1526–7.

CHAPTER EIGHT
Li Shimin and the military consolidation of the Tang dynasty

During the nearly three centuries from the collapse of the Western Jin to the reunification of China under the Sui, both north and south had given rise to a bewildering profusion of dynastic regimes. Dynasties replaced one another in rapid succession, sometimes by means of an internal military revolt or coup d'état (the usual pattern in the south) and sometimes through the conquest of one state by another (more common in the north). The fall of the Sui dynasty and its replacement by the Tang followed a different script, one that had first been acted out at the end of the third century BC, when the Qin dynasty had given way to Western Han. A similar performance occurred early in the first century AD, when the short-lived regime of Wang Mang was replaced by the Eastern Han, and some elements could be found in the Eastern Han collapse – though in this case it took nearly a century for a unified successor state to appear. After the founding of the Tang dynasty, the pattern would be repeated at least two more times, in the transitions from Tang to Song and Yuan to Ming (with the Ming–Qing transition also showing many of the same features). The typical sequence was a combination of natural disasters (floods, droughts) and government exactions stimulating grassroots "peasant" rebellions, sometimes of a sectarian nature, which brought down the old dynasty and gave rise to a number of regional warlord regimes. Eventually one of these regimes would succeed in crushing its rivals, establishing a new imperial government, and unifying the country. In the case of the transition from Sui to Tang, this process lasted a little more than ten years, from the first stirrings of revolt against Sui rule to the elimination of the last serious military challenge to the authority of the new dynasty. Tang success owed much to diplomatic efforts and the adroit manipulation of imperial ritual, supernatural portents, and other time-honored symbols of political legitimacy.[1] It also helped that the Tang founders emerged from the northwestern aristocracy that constituted the core of the Sui political elite, and therefore enjoyed a very substantial advantage in attracting the support of other members of the same class. Above all, however, the initial consolidation of Tang rule was a military process; the Tang founders attracted support because they were able to overcome their rivals on the battlefield. This chapter will examine the military process and the role of Li Shimin, second son of the first Tang ruler and later emperor

himself, who was the principal Tang field commander and one of the most celebrated military leaders in all of Chinese history.

The rapid decline of Sui authority in the years after 612 was accompanied by the rise of disorderly and violent conditions at the local level. The principal actors there can be sorted into three categories: bandit-rebels whose activities were of a "predatory" nature, local elites who organized forces to protect their communities from the depredations of the bandits, and local Sui officials, who now enjoyed unaccustomed freedom of maneuver as a result of the weakness of the center.[2] The first type began as deserters and outlaws who took refuge from the authorities in the hills, marshes, and forests. As their numbers grew, they ventured out to attack and plunder the walled towns. In many cases, their leaders were not ordinary peasants, but minor local officials or men of substance in their communities. Dou Jiande, who emerged from the Gaojibo marshes to become the principal rebel leader in central Hebei, came from a relatively wealthy farming family and had once been a village head, while Zhai Rang, the leader of the Wagang rebels south of the Yellow River, had been a minor official dealing with judicial affairs in Dong commandery. Both men had difficult relationships with authority, however. Dou admired the spirit of the *xia*, local strongmen and gangsters who had resisted the authority of earlier dynasties while meting out their own brand of extra-legal justice; he had once had to flee for his life because of an offense he committed, but was later able to return home under an amnesty. Zhai, too, took up the life of an outlaw after he was condemned to death for an offence.[3] Their activities made survival even more difficult for those who remained in the towns and villages. One of the worst offenders was a bandit leader named Zhu Can, formerly a clerk in a county office in what is now northern Anhui, whose followers ravaged southern Henan and the valley of the Han River.

> The prefectures and counties taken by Can were all made to yield their grain stores to provision the army, which wandered aimlessly. When they departed from a place they burned whatever remained and destroyed the inner and outer walls. Nor did they work at planting and harvesting, but made pillage and robbery their occupation. The people were starving, the corpses piled up, and many turned to cannibalism.[4]

At one time there were between twenty and thirty bandit armies operating in Hebei alone.[5]

To protect themselves and their communities against the bandits, local elites organized their kinsmen and neighbors into militia forces. Many also followed another time-honored response to troubled times and relocated to forts built on hilltops or in other easily defensible locations.[6] One leader of protective forces was Lu Zushang, a man from Le'an in Yiyang commandery, south of the Huai River. He was the son of a Sui general, and his family was wealthy and locally

influential. Though still a teenager Lu recruited "stalwart warriors" and pursued the bandits, with the result that before long they no longer dared to enter his district. He eventually established himself as governor of Yiyang.[7] Another such leader was Su Yong of Xindu commandery in central Hebei, who led several thousand local men against the rebels in support of the Sui authorities. When Su died, the commandery governor asked his son to take over command of these troops.[8] In many areas local power remained in the hands of regular Sui appointees, but they were often cut off from higher authority and thown back upon their own resources. One such official was Li Xizhi, the deputy governor of Shian commandery in the far south (today's Guilin), who used his own family fortune to recruit 3000 fighting men to defend the headquarters town of the commandery.[9] Many of these men continued to uphold the appearance of loyalty to the Sui house even after the assassination of Emperor Yang in the spring of 618, but in effect they had already become autonomous political actors.

Over the course of several years, the confusing mosaic of local violence resolved into a simpler pattern of regional conflict among a relatively small number of major warlords. Some of the local contenders for power proved to be more ambitious, capable, and successful than others; they were able to incorporate many armed bands of various stripes into their political–military organizations, and with these larger forces they came to dominate territories more extensive than one or two commanderies. These new regional leaders included both bandit chiefs and men who had been Sui officials. The ones who had begun their careers as bandits showed an ability and willingness to accommodate the interests of the "protective" groups by establishing more or less stable regional governments. Once this had been accomplished, it became quite easy to gain the support of local elites, since these men were generally more interested in preserving their own wealth and power than in defending the Sui dynasty.[10] Where local elites or former Sui officials were the ones establishing a regional regime, they were able to use their opposition to Sui rule as a basis for winning over the bandit leaders.[11] In the course of 617 and 618, most of the emerging regional leaders asserted claims to sovereignty over the whole of China by assuming imperial titles, performing imperial rituals, and giving court offices to their key followers.

By the summer of 618, there were nine major contenders for power. The one-time bandit Dou Jiande now dominated central Hebei and had assumed the style of "King of Changle" in 617; he would soon extend his power southward to the Yellow River and change his title to "King of Xia." At a time when many of the other rebel leaders in Henan and Hebei were carrying out an indiscriminate *jacquerie* against

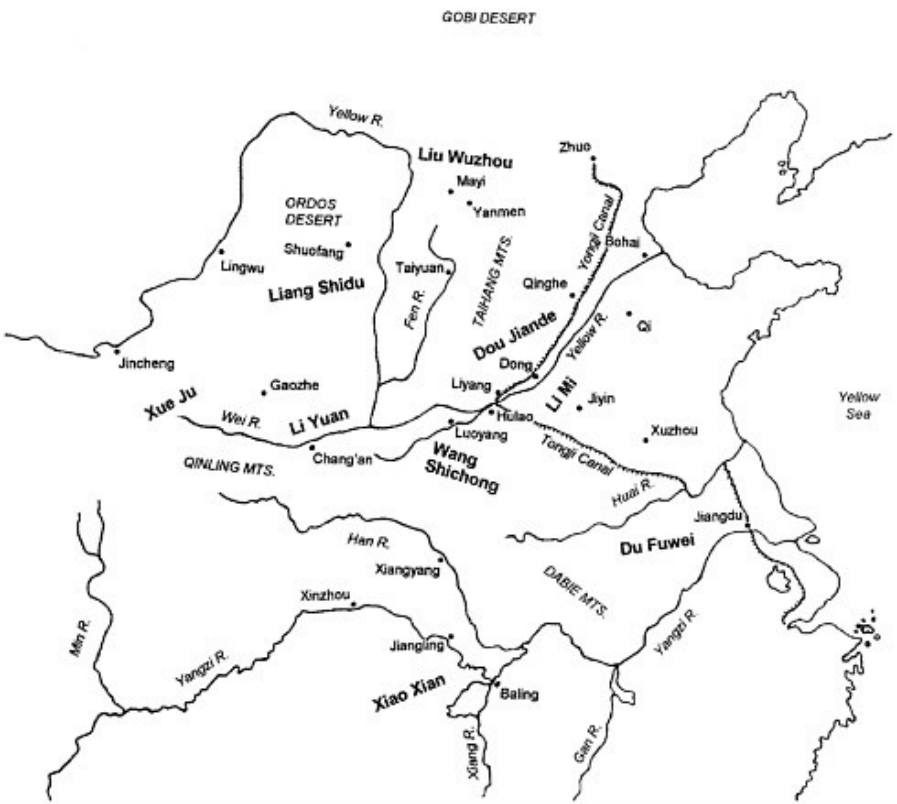
Sui officials and members of the educated classes in general (it being the policy of one Meng Haigong of Jiyin to kill anyone he came across who could quote from the Confucian classics or the histories), Dou was one of the few who recognized the usefulness of these people and made efforts to conciliate them and recruit them into his service. Sui officials began to go over to him in large numbers, bringing whole commanderies with them, and with their assistance Dou began to set up a regular administrative structure.[12]

South of the Yellow River in Henan, the dominant rebel leader was Li Mi. Li was a prominent member of the northwestern aristocracy who had participated in Yang Xuangan's rebellion in 613 and then taken refuge with the bandit group led by Zhai Rang. Zhai initially put Li forward as a figurehead, but Li gradually accumulated real power in his hands and was able to eliminate Zhai in a bloody coup near the end of 617.[13] Li's following consisted of an uneasy coalition of peasant rebels and former Sui troops, and his strength rested to a very large extent on his control of the great Sui granary at the confluence of the Luo River and the Yellow River, which enabled him to feed a very large number of followers and helped to attract the allegiance of other rebel leaders in Henan and Shandong.[14] Li took the relatively modest title of "Duke of Wei," but his pronunciamento of June 6, 617, left little doubt that he had his eye on the imperial throne.[15] Li's principal opponent was Wang Shichong, a Sui general based at Luoyang. Wang was the son of a Sui official, but came from a somewhat lower social stratum than Li Mi; his father was apparently an Iranian-speaking Sogdian from the far northwest (*Xi Yu hu ren*). Wang was initially subject to the authority of a Sui regency committee in Luoyang, but became the effective ruler of the city – albeit still nominally loyal to Sui – after a coup on August 11, 618. Li Mi had the upper hand in his conflict with Wang Shichong, and from the early spring of 618 his army occupied key positions just outside Luoyang and threatened to starve the city into surrender.[16]

Farther south, between the Huai River and the Yangzi, the most powerful figure was Du Fuwei. Du came from a very poor peasant family and began his career as a teenage brigand on the "Long White Mountain" in Qi commandery, south of the Yellow River in today's Shandong province. He led a band of followers south across the Huai River to escape pressure from Sui forces, came to dominate the region, and began to extend his power to the south side of the Yangzi.[17] Du's ambitions seem to have been more modest than those of many other leaders, and he did not assume an imperial title. A very different approach was taken by Xiao Xian, the other major rebel leader in the south. Xiao had been a Sui county magistrate, but, more significantly, he was also a scion of the ruling house of the Liang dynasty, which

had fallen only sixty years before. He was initially put forward as a figurehead by a cabal of middle-ranking officers from a "soaring hawk regimental headquarters" in Baling commandery in northern Hunan. Manuevering dexterously to establish himself as a real ruler rather than a puppet, Xiao moved his capital to Jiangling, brought almost all of the territory south of the Yangzi under his control, and proclaimed himself emperor of a revived Liang state in 618.[18]

An important contender in the northwest was Xue Ju, a member of the local elite of Jincheng commandery (modern Lanzhou) and a battalion commander of the local "soaring hawk" regiment. On May 13, 617, he sent his troops to



Map 14 Contenders for power in AD 618

arrest the local Sui officials, threw open the state granaries to feed the poor, and proclaimed himself "Hegemon King of Western Qin." He soon brought all of eastern Gansu under his control and upgraded his title to emperor.[19] Two other Sui regimental officers also seized power at different points on the northern frontier in the spring of 617. Liang Shidu, a former regimental commander from a prominent family of

Shuofang commandery on the southern edge of the Ordos, seized power from the commandery officials and declared the establishment of the "Liang" state with himself as emperor.[20] Only a week later, a battalion commander named Liu Wuzhou murdered the governor of Mayi commandery (southwest of Datong in modern Shanxi province). He too opened the granaries, brought the surrounding territory under his control, and adopted an imperial title. Both Liu and Liang received strong backing from Shibi Qaghan of the Eastern Turks, who was eager to play the game of divide and rule in the crumbling Sui empire.[21]

At Jincheng, Shuofang, and Mayi, local elites who held commands in the Sui regimental system were able to "privatize" the soldiers of their local units. These men were, however, relatively minor competitors when compared with Li Yuan, the Sui viceroy of Taiyuan with direct administrative control over five commanderies in northern and central Shanxi. Li belonged to a prominent northwestern family that had intermarried with the ruling houses of Sui and Northern Zhou, and his grandfather had been a close associate of the great Yuwen Tai. When he turned against Emperor Yang in the summer of 617, Li Yuan was able to build a powerful army from the "soaring hawk" regiments under his command supplemented by thousands of recruits raised from the large population of Taiyuan commandery.[22] This force marched on the Sui capital of Daxingcheng (soon to be renamed Chang'an) in the late summer and autumn of 617, defeating two Sui armies en route and capturing the city near the end of the year.[23] This move gave Li Yuan control of both the Wei River valley and the most valuable and populous sections of what is now Shanxi province, and established him as a major contender for empire-wide power. He initially adopted the guise of a Sui loyalist and enthroned a grandson of Emperor Yang as a puppet ruler, then dispensed with this pretense and took the throne himself as the first emperor of the Tang dynasty on June 18, 618.

At the end of the summer of 618, the most formidable of the emerging regional powers were Li Mi in Henan, Dou Jiande's Xia regime in Hebei, and Li Yuan's Tang state in Guanzhong and Shanxi. While most of the regional leaders seem at this point to have been concerned primarily with the consolidation of their territorial bases and managed to avoid major conflicts with their neighbors, there were two large-scale wars in progress where major powers happened to be competing for the same geographical niche. In the northwest, the Xue forces directly threatened Tang control of the Wei River valley. Li Yuan dispatched a number of military and diplomatic missions to win over uncommitted forces on the eastern plains, but the major Tang military effort in 618 was directed westward into Gansu. In the east, the

principal conflict was between Li Mi and Wang Shichong. Wang was fighting for survival, while Li would not be able to cement his hold over Henan until he disposed of the remnant Sui forces and captured Luoyang. The stakes here were extremely high, since the victor would be left in possession of the most populous region of the Sui empire and could expect to receive the allegiance of many of the smaller armed factions.

By the early autumn of 618, the defenders of Luoyang were faced with starvation. Wang Shichong decided to march out and offer battle to Li Mi in the hope of inflicting enough damage to break Li's grip on Luoyang and perhaps even drive him from the granary at the mouth of the Luo River. From among the much larger garrison, Wang selected a relatively compact force of 20,000 "elite troops" of whom about 1000 were cavalry. Many if not all of them seem to have been troops recruited south of Huai River who had been following Wang against various rebel armies for several years.[24] To arouse the enthusiasm of his troops for the coming battle, Wang erected a shrine to the Duke of Zhou, the ancient statesman who had founded the city of Luoyang in the eleventh century BC, and had shamans announce the Duke's intention: if the soldiers went out to fight Li Mi they would certainly win great merit, but if they refused they would all die of a pestilence.[25] (Wang had a keen interest in divination and was fond of invoking unseen powers; one of his generals once complained that Wang "likes to make oaths and incantations, just like a shaman or an old witch."[26]) In this case Wang's ploy seems to have achieved the intended effect, and on October 4, 618, he led his picked force out of Luoyang. They advanced eastward along the south bank of the Luo River to bypass Li Mi's forward positions, then crossed to the north bank and continued their advance with a canal parallel to the river protecting their left flank. On the afternoon of October 5, the Sui army made camp just southwest of the walled county town of Yanshi, about twenty miles from Luoyang. Immediately in front of them, to the north, was the canal. To their right the canal flowed into the Luo River just above Yanshi; on their left, the land between the river and the canal stretched like a causeway all the way back to Luoyang. Farther to the north, on the other side of a plain several miles across, rose the long ridge of the Mang hills, an extension of the Long Mountains that passed north of Luoyang and continued all the way to the mouth of the Luo River. Behind them flowed the Luo River. Wang and his men were deep behind rebel lines, and in the event of defeat escape would be all but impossible.[27]

When the Sui army column issued from Luoyang on October 4, Li Mi was encamped with his main field army at the Jinyong Fortress, about six miles east of the city. Leaving one of his generals to hold the

fortress, Li took his best troops, probably numbering about 40,000, and marched east to Yanshi. There he camped on the heights of Mangshan and summoned his generals to a council of war.[28] The discussion centered on a single question: should the rebels join battle with Wang Shichong's army, or should they seek to avoid an engagement? Li Mi argued that they should avoid battle. Wang's men were a picked, elite force, and they had plunged deep into hostile territory and would be sure to fight desperately. Moreover, the fact that their food supplies were exhausted made it imperative for them to seek a quick resolution through battle. Under these circumstances, Li averred, all the rebels had to do was sit tight. Wang had gotten himself into a situation from which he could not retreat, and his provisions would soon be used up. But this plan was not to the liking of the majority of Li's generals. They argued that Wang's good troops were few in number and had been demoralized by repeated defeats, and pointed to the numerical advantage enjoyed by their own side. Some of these men were former bandit chiefs and others defectors from the Sui forces, but all were potentially autonomous warlords who commanded the personal loyalty of their own subordinates. In spite of his misgivings, Li had no choice but to yield to the majority.[29]

The rebels apparently decided to wait for Wang Shichong to make the first move. Li Mi remained in his main camp on top of Mangshan, while one of his generals named Shan Xiongxin established a separate camp in the plain just north of the walls of Yanshi. Li's dispositions were better suited for defense than for offense. His two camps were close enough to provide mutual support, and may be visualized as an inverted letter "L" running east along the mountain and then turning sharply south across the plain to Yanshi. Should Wang be foolish enough to attack Li's camp on Mangshan, he would soon have Shan Xiongxin charging into his right flank and rear; if he attacked Shan, Li could apply the same treatment on the left. Relying on these dispositions and the natural strength of his hilltop position, Li did not bother to fortify his camp. When Wang Shichong brought his army across the canal, Li would descend into the plain to crush him.[30]

The first clash between the two armies occurred late on October 5. Wang sent several hundred of his cavalry across the canal to attack Shan Xiongxin's camp, and Li Mi responded by sending a force to succor Shan. The skirmish was soon brought to a close by darkness, and both sides returned to their respective camps. Wang's attack on the eastern end of Li's line was probably intended to draw his opponent's attention away from the other flank. Under cover of darkness, Wang sent a detachment of 200 horsemen up into the hills, where they concealed themselves in a ravine behind Li's position.[31]

The Sui general had already put bridges across the canal, and in the

pre-dawn darkness of October 6 he led his main force over to the other side and managed to deploy his men in battle formation very close to the enemy camp. Li's pickets – if indeed there were any – failed to detect the approach of the Sui army. It was only at daybreak that the rebels became aware of their peril and began to pour out of their unfortified camp and deploy for battle. But by then it was already too late as Wang's army surged forward to strike them before they had completed their deployment. This alone may have been sufficient to decide the outcome, but Wang also had a second surprise for the rebels. Hardly had the two armies clashed when, in accordance with his prearranged plan, the 200 cavalry who had made their way around behind Li's position charged down into the camp from the north and began to set fire to the tents and huts. When the rebels saw the flames rising from their camp, their collapse was immediate and complete. Several large contingents surrendered en masse on the field of battle, while Li made his escape with about 10,000 men.[32] This battle marked the end of Li Mi's power. His followers still held many strong positions, but he could no longer count on their loyalty. Instead of trying to rally his forces, he fled westward to surrender to Li Yuan in Guanzhong. Most of Li's army and territories promptly submitted to Wang Shichong, who became the new master of Henan. It was reported that Wang "gathered in all of Li's multitudes. East to the sea and south as far as the River Yangzi, all came to adhere to him."[33]

Wang Shichong's defeat of Li Mi at Yanshi well illustrates the swift reversal of political fortunes that could follow from the outcome of a single major battle, as subordinate commanders promptly transferred their allegiance to the victor who now appeared to have received Heaven's seal of approval. This episode also underlines the fragility of the political–military factions that were competing for power in a divided China. The various regional leaders and would-be emperors all presided over diverse coalitions of lesser leaders of various stripes – ranging from former Sui officials to ex-bandits – who commanded the immediate loyalty of their followers and were concerned primarily with guaranteeing their own wealth, power, and status by aligning themselves with the ultimate winner. Leadership was to a large extent a matter of intra-coalitional diplomacy; subordinates could sometimes overrule their chief, as at Li Mi's council of war, and a disgruntled follower could have a decisive impact in a crisis. Li's subordinate Shan Xiongxin occupied a position from which he should have been able to make a devastating attack on Wang Shichong's flank when the Sui general attacked the main rebel camp on the morning of October 6, yet no such riposte is recorded. It is possible that Shan's men were as surprised as the main body under Li, and therefore unable to mount an effective response. Another possibility is that Shan sat on his hands

and deliberately failed to intervene. Shan was one of the original bandit followers of the murdered Zhai Rang, and his relations with Li Mi were badly strained. Within a few days of the defeat at Yanshi he brought his command over to Wang Shichong.[34]

The battle at Yanshi also points to the central place of stratagems and psychological considerations in traditional Chinese warfare. Accounts of medieval Chinese battles are filled with ambushes, feigned flights, and all sorts of surprises, tricks, and traps. This literature indicates that the goal of commanders in battle was not simply to overpower their opponents, but somehow to achieve a psychological effect that would trigger the collapse and panic-stricken flight of the opposing army.[35] This approach was recommended by the ancient treatises on the art of war, and by the numerous precedents recorded in earlier histories, such as Sima Qian's *Historical Records* and Ban Gu's *History of the Han Dynasty*. Both Li Mi and Wang Shichong were educated men who are supposed to have had some familiarity with this literature.[36] This seems to be borne out by their actions. Wang Shichong could have precipitated a decisive battle with Li Mi simply by marching out of the gates of Luoyang and advancing a short distance toward the Jinyong Fortress; instead, he chose to move more than twenty miles east of the city and fight with his back to a river, making escape all but impossible in the event of defeat. His battle plan very closely resembles that adopted by the great Han general Han Xin at the battle of Jingxing in 205 BC and recorded by Sima Qian. The army of the kingdom of Zhao, many times larger than that led by Han Xin, occupied a strong fortified camp at the mouth of the Jingxing Pass. Han led his army out of the pass and deployed for battle with the Zhao camp in front of him and a river at his back. After the Zhao soldiers had all swarmed out to attack Han's main body, 2000 cavalrymen that he had secretly sent into the mountains behind the Zhao position charged into the empty camp and replaced the Zhao banners with their own. The sight of this triggered the collapse of the Zhao army.[37] After the battle was won, Han Xin explained his risky deployment in terms of the need to solidify his soldiers' morale and cited the ancient military treatise attributed to Sunzi on the galvanizing effect of terrain from which there is no escape save through victory: "Throw them into a place from which there is nowhere to go, and they will die rather than flee. When they are facing death, how could one not obtain the utmost strength from the officers and men? When soldiers have fallen in deep, they have no sense of fear."[38] The deliberate occupation of "fatal terrain" (*si di*) was seen as a psychological trigger by which a commander could stimulate a sort of primal savagery in men who were otherwise no more than indifferent soldiers. This idea would have been familiar to both Wang

Shichong and Li Mi; and it helps to explain both Wang's odd choice of position and Li's reluctance to join battle with him.[39]

At the same time that Wang Shichong was disposing of Li Mi, the principal Tang field army was in the midst of a prolonged confrontation with the forces of the Xue family on the northwestern periphery of the Wei River valley. The focus of this conflict was the upper course of the Jing River, a tributary of the Wei, in the area that is now on the border of the two provinces of Shaanxi and Gansu. The Tang founder had sent his second son, Li Shimin, to command the army facing the Xue forces. At this time Shimin was only nineteen years old, but he had already demonstrated his martial prowess in several battles and had held a major independent command during the latter part of the Tang advance on Chang'an in 617.[40] Although Shimin was surely not the prime mover of the Tang founding, as is asserted in the traditional histories which are based on sources compiled after his usurpation of the throne in 626, he was still an extremely capable military and political leader in spite of his youth. Like other members of his class, Li Shimin was trained in both the literary arts needed to run a civil administration and the martial skills needed to lead men in battle. He was fully literate and must have had some acquaintance with the histories and the Confucian classics; he was also an accomplished (if not outstanding) poet and calligrapher.[41] On the other hand, he was trained in horsemanship, archery, and swordplay, and was accustomed to taking a very active role in the rough-and-tumble of close combat, fighting until his sword was broken and his sleeves filled with blood.[42] During the period when his father was the principal Sui commander in what is now Shanxi, he would have had ample opportunity to become acquainted with both administrative procedures and military techniques. The magnitude of Shimin's accomplishment, however, was such that it is difficult to attribute it to his upbringing alone. His is one case where the use of the word "genius" does not seem at all inappropriate.

Li Shimin's northwestern campaign did not get off to a smooth start. Xue Ju inflicted a serious defeat on the Tang army in the first battle of Qianshuiyuan, fought on August 6, 618. Although it is not entirely clear whether the fiasco was the fault of Shimin himself or of subordinates who failed to heed his instructions, the result was a Tang retreat all the way back to Chang'an.[43] When Shimin returned to the Jing valley in September, he faced a new opponent. Xue Ju had just died, apparently of natural causes, and leadership of the Qin forces had passed to his son Xue Ren'gao. This time Shimin occupied a strong fortified camp near the town of Gaozhe. He sent units out to fight small engagements with the enemy, but resolutely refused to commit his main body to a major battle. After a confrontation lasting some

sixty days, Xue's army ran short of provisions and became increasingly disaffected – with several generals soon bringing their troops over to the Tang side. Having received an unmistakable signal that the enemy was now vulnerable, Shimin sent out two detachments one after another to invite attack. Once Xue's army had worn itself out assailing these decoys, Shimin approached from an unexpected direction with his main body and scored a decisive victory at the second battle of Qianshuiyuan on November 29. A vigorous cavalry pursuit carried him to the walls of the town that was serving as the enemy base, and induced Xue Ren'gao's capitulation on November 30.[44]

Shimin's next major campaign took place in Hedong, today's Shanxi, where he was sent to counter the forces of Liu Wuzhou. Liu and his principal field commander, a former bandit leader named Song Jin'gang, had pushed south from their base at Mayi in the late autumn of 619 to drive the Tang garrison from Taiyuan and overrun almost all of the Fen River valley. After marching into Hedong over the frozen Yellow River at the end of 619, Shimin's first move was to construct a strong fortified camp at Bobi (some six miles southwest of today's Xinjiang, Shanxi), avoid a major engagement, and wait for the enemy to weaken. As he analyzed the situation, the formidable army under Song Jin'gang had a serious weakness in that it was at the end of a long supply line and heavily dependent upon plundering the countryside in order to feed itself. For this reason it was in Song's interest to seek a decisive engagement as soon as possible, and Shimin was determined to deny him this opportunity. But even while the main Tang army kept to its defenses, its commander led smaller columns to attack isolated enemy detachments. He also sent troops by a roundabout route to harass the enemy supply line, which descended the Fen River valley from Taiyuan. In the middle of May 620, after a confrontation that had lasted some five months, Song's provisions were finally exhausted and he had no choice but to retreat northward toward his base. At this moment, with the opposing army strung out along the the roads, Shimin finally unleashed his counterattack. Song Jin'gang's army was overtaken and destroyed piecemeal in a series of clashes along the Fen River south of Taiyuan between May 21 and June 1.[45] Just as after the battle at Qianshuiyuan, but on a much larger scale, Shimin pushed his cavalry pursuit to the utmost and gave his opponents no opportunity to rally. Song's master Liu Wuzhou abandoned Taiyuan to seek refuge with his Turkish sponsors.

This campaign recovered Shanxi for Tang and eliminated a major threat; it also freed the Tang armies to push eastward into the plains of Henan, where Wang Shichong had eliminated his Sui puppet and proclaimed himself emperor of Zheng. In early August 620, Li Shimin began his advance on Wang Shichong's Luoyang with an army of

50,000 men. By the end of the month, he had occupied the heights of the Mang hills and was beginning to establish a chain of fortified camps to command the approaches to the city.[46] At the same time, subsidiary Tang columns advanced to occupy territories farther to the north and south of Luoyang. In the early autumn, a Tang force seized the strategic pass of Huanyuan in the Songshan massif, about twenty-five miles east of the city.[47] These successes apparently triggered the defection to the Tang camp of a large number of local leaders who had previously adhered to Wang Shichong. By the end of the year, virtually all of the local magnates, garrison commanders, and bandit chiefs of central Henan had switched their allegiance to Tang, affecting a vast area roughly corresponding to the Sui commanderies of Xingyang, Ru'nan, Huai'an, Nanyang, Yingchuan, Huaiyang, Qiao, Handong, and parts of Liang and Dongping.[48] Not only was Wang Shichong's supply line to the east effectively severed, but he had lost almost his entire territorial base except for distant strongholds at Xiangyang and Xuzhou from which he was now completely isolated.

Defeated in several engagements outside the walls of Luoyang, Wang Shichong now faced the slow, inevitable strangulation of his capital by the Tang blockade. By the spring of 621, conditions within the stricken city were if anything even worse than in the days of Li Mi's encirclement.

> The millet in the granaries was nearly gone, and people in the city were eating one another. Some took dirt and put it in vessels to separate out the impurities. The sand and pebbles having settled to the bottom, they skimmed off the mud that was left floating on the surface, threw scraps of rice into it, formed it into cakes and ate them.[49]

Wang tried to bring in grain from the few outlying towns under his control, but this was an extremely difficult undertaking with so many Tang troops roaming the area.[50] After the loss of several thousand men in another battle outside the walls on March 11, 621, there was little Wang could do except hope for the speedy arrival of the Hebei warlord Dou Jiande, who had earlier promised to come to his assistance.[51]

Near the end of 620, Dou had been persuaded to heed Wang's appeals for help by the arguments of his advisor Liu Bin. Liu pointed out that before Li Shimin's advance on Luoyang there had been a three-way balance of power between Tang in Guanzhong, Zheng in Henan, and Dou's own Xia state in Hebei. Now, however, Tang had clearly gained the advantage over Zheng, and once Zheng fell Xia would be endangered, he said, citing the ancient proverb, "when the lips are gone, the teeth will become cold."[52] Balance-of-power considerations, therefore, lay at the heart of Dou's decision to rescue Wang Shichong, but his attitude toward his new ally was not without complexities. In the same speech in which he urged an alliance with Wang, Liu Bin also pointed out that the desperate, damaging struggle between Tang

and Zheng would create the conditions for Dou's future annexation of the badly weakened Zheng state. This "laughing third" approach was a recurring theme in China's multi-cornered internal conflicts, and may help to explain why Dou postponed his expedition to relieve Luoyang for several months while he subjugated local bandit leaders south of the Yellow River in what is now Shandong.[53] It was not until April of 621 that Dou began his advance on Luoyang with a force reportedly numbering 100,000 men. The Xia army moved west along the south bank of the Yellow River, accompanied by boats and barges laden with supplies.[54]

As Dou's huge army moved ever closer to Luoyang, Li Shimin rejected suggestions that he abandon the siege and retreat to the safety of Guanzhong. Instead, he left the bulk of the Tang army to continue the siege while he led a light column to block Dou's advance at the strategic pass of Hulao, about sixty miles east of Luoyang.[55] A Western sinologist who visited the site in the early 1930s described it as a "Chinese Thermopylae":

> Fifty miles east of Lo Yang, the confused loess hills which stretch eastward along the south bank of the Yellow river from the Shensi border end abruptly at the stream of Ssu Shui. The stream flows in a flat valley about a mile broad, bordered to the west by the loess hills which end in a steep slope. To the east the stream has in past ages scoured out a low, vertical cliff, on top of which the great plain begins; flat, featureless, dotted at intervals with villages in groves of trees. The stream itself, receding from the cliff in the course of time, now flows in the centre of the sunken valley, with a stretch of flat land on either bank. The road from the east to Lo Yang and Shensi descends into the ravine, crossing the stream at the little city of Ssu-shui, before entering the hills by a narrow defile among precipices.[56]

After occupying the town and the hills above the pass on April 22, Shimin refused to bring his army out for a general engagement with the Xia forces. The natural strength of his position decreed that a battle could not occur there without his consent, and he had no reason to risk a decision right away since each passing day brought the starving defenders of Luoyang closer to surrender. Dou's army camped on the plain about ten miles east of Hulao. There it remained for more than a month. Dou made no effort to bypass the Hulao position by marching to the north or south, perhaps because such a move would have taken him away from his grain barges and riverine supply line.[57]

Toward the end of May, the Tang commander took steps to draw Dou into a decisive battle in front of Hulao. He sent cavalry forces out to raid the Xia supply line, while at the same time positioning his troops at the Hulao Pass in such a way as to give an impression that the place was weakly held.[58] The sources do not say why Li Shimin chose to provoke a battle at this particular time. It is possible that he believed the morale of Dou's men had deteriorated, and it is very likely that he did not wish to allow the exposed Xia army to withdraw to safety in Hebei after Luoyang had fallen. A decisive victory over Dou in Henan might save Tang the trouble of conquering Hebei later on, and we can

be certain that Shimin understood that the terrain before Hulao was a potential death trap for the Xia army.

Whatever Li Shimin's reasons for precipitating a battle, his opponent did not fail to snap at the proffered bait. By the early morning hours of May 28, Dou Jiande had set a large portion of his army in motion across the plain toward Hulao. His men descended into the valley of the Sishui by several paths and deployed along the east bank of the stream, their line stretching from the Yellow River on the north to "Magpie Mountain" (a high point along the eastern escarpment) on the south, a distance of perhaps a mile and a half. Before them on the opposite bank was the walled town of Sishui, which guarded the entrance to the narrow defile of Hulao.[59] At this point, they must have discovered that the town and the precipitous heights behind it were much more strongly held than they had been led to expect.

Li Shimin did not immediately deploy his army into a line of battle to face Dou's formation on the opposite side of the stream, but held his troops back in positions that were all but unassailable. The Tang commander ascended a height to observe the Xia army, then explained his plan to his officers: they would remain within their defenses until the enemy troops, tired and hungry after a long, fruitless wait in formation, began to withdraw. At this point, they would rush out and fall upon the by now demoralized and disorganized Xia army. Under these circumstances, he said, victory would be certain.[60] Punctuated by skirmishes between small units of cavalry, the standoff continued from 7 or 8 AM, when the Xia army had first completed its deployment, until the noon hour. Tired, hungry, and thirsty, Dou's soldiers now struggled with one another for drinking water, and many of them simply sat down in the ranks or milled about in confusion. Perceiving the discomfort and disorganization in the enemy's ranks, Li Shimin now ordered a detachment of 300 cavalry to ride along the front of their formation and test their reaction. When the Xia troops wavered and drew back, the Tang commander ordered some of his cavalry units to move south and then east in order to turn the enemy's left flank.[61] Dou's response to the developing threat to his exposed left was to attempt to withdraw his army from the narrow valley of the Sishui to the much stronger defensive position atop the eastern escarpment.[62] But this operation meant the disruption of his army's linear formation, thereby providing the opening for the second phase of Li Shimin's attack. Personally leading a strong force of light cavalry, the Tang prince charged across the Sishui to cut into the retreating Xia troops, with the main body of the Tang army following in echelon behind him.[63] In the course of the ensuing melee, Shimin's cousin Li Daoxuan is supposed to have cut his way completely through the Xia mass, forced

his way back through the same way he had come, then repeated the operation several more times; by the time the battle was over, he had so many arrows sticking out of his armor that he looked like a porcupine.[64] According to most of the surviving narrative accounts, the final collapse of the Xia army came after Li Shimin and a small party of horsemen cut their way through to the top of the eastern escarpment and unfurled the Tang banners for all to see, though it is possible that the arrival of the Tang flanking column from the south was also a contributing factor.[65]

The Xia collapse was total. Three thousand of Dou Jiande's soldiers were dead on the field or slain during the pursuit; another 50,000 were reportedly taken prisoner. Most of these must have fallen into Tang hands because their escape was blocked by the eastern cliffs. Among the prisoners was Dou himself, who had been wounded by a lance thrust during the fighting and was trying to make his escape by way of an islet in the Yellow River when he was intercepted and captured by two Tang officers.[66] The pursuit continued for a distance of ten miles, right up to walls of the Xia camp. Dou and the other high-ranking captives from Hulao were paraded beneath the walls of Luoyang on June 3, and Wang Shichong, realizing that his situation was hopeless, capitulated the next day.[67] Dou's wife and his closest political associates escaped from the camp on the Yellow River and made their way back to Hebei with a small cavalry escort. There some Xia officials wanted to enthrone Dou's adopted son and continue the struggle, but the most senior leaders were of the opinion that the magnitude of the Tang victory allowed only one conclusion – that Li Yuan had received Heaven's mandate, in the face of which further resistance would be futile. On June 10 they surrendered Dou's core prefectures to the Tang, and within a few days all of the remaining Xia territories also submitted.[68]

Li Shimin's victory at Hulao conformed to essentially the same formula as his earlier victories over Xue Ren'gao and Liu Wuzhou. In all of these cases he avoided a general engagement by occupying a strong defensive position or fortified camp, while sending out smaller detachments to harass the enemy forces or raid their supply lines. It was only after the enemy had begun to weaken or had made themselves vulnerable by initiating a withdrawal that Li Shimin would unleash a ferocious attack by his main force. His aim was not simply to defeat his opponent on the battlefield but to completely eliminate the enemy regime, and it was his practice to continue a relentless cavalry pursuit until this aim had been accomplished. This pattern was characteristic of most of the major engagements in which Li Shimin exercised battlefield command; it was, so to speak, his strategic trademark.[69] Success was usually facilitated by the fact that the

enemy had already advanced a great distance and stood at the end of a long and tenuous supply line when confronted by the Tang prince, whose own supply line was shorter or at least more secure.

Although the Tang histories contain no clear statement that Li Shimin had studied the ancient military treatises as a youth, his operational style was very much in accord with the precepts of Sunzi's *Art of War*.[70] The author of this text seems to have been well aware that delay and the avoidance of decision by battle could often be the best means of staving off immediate defeat and thereby preserving the possibility of eventual victory: "In former times those who were adept at war would first make themselves impossible to defeat, thereby to await the opportunity when it would be possible to defeat the enemy."[71] The second part of the strategy was to watch for an opening, wait for the enemy to tire or make a mistake, then fall upon him at the moment of his greatest vulnerability. "One who is adept at war first positions himself where he cannot be defeated, and then never misses any possibility of defeating the enemy. For this reason, the victorious army will first make certain of victory and only afterwards seek to engage in combat."[72] A show of timidity or weakness was, of course, ideal for lulling the enemy into letting down his guard and thus creating an opening for the decisive blow: "For this reason, at first be like a virgin, so the enemy will open his door; afterward be as fast as a fleeing hare, so the enemy won't have time to resist."[73] These teachings would have been known to many military leaders, but Li Shimin – if indeed he was familiar with them at all – did far better than most when it came to translating these rather abstract directives into concrete operational plans. It seems unlikely that his success was based entirely on book-learning. In later years, he would attribute his ability to evaluate the strength of the enemy – an essential element in deciding when to attack – to the fact that he had grown up in the midst of armies and war.[74]

In addition to his care in ensuring that his major battles occurred on his terms and at the time of his choosing, Li Shimin's practice of the military art was also marked by a distinctive tactical pattern. This typically involved the use of preliminary infantry or cavalry attacks to engage and pin down sections of the enemy battleline, preparing the way for the main assault – a cavalry charge that aimed at cutting through the line on a relatively narrow front, then hitting it from behind to cause the complete collapse of the enemy formation. When he fought Song Jin'gang at Jiexiu (south of Taiyuan) on June 1, 620, he sent detachments to engage the northern and southern ends of the enemy line before leading his elite cavalry to strike the decisive blow in the center. In a battle fought just outside Luoyang on March 11, 621, he first sent a force of 5000 infantry to engage Wang Shichong's

army before he charged down from the northern heights with the cavalry.[75] And at Hulao, as we have seen, he first sent horsemen south to threaten the Xia left before he led the main body forward to the attack. The details might change, but the basic pattern rarely varied.

Two elements of Li Shimin's battle plan are worth noting. The first is his own role on the battlefield. While the Tang prince's favored strategy was extremely cautious, his personal behavior in combat was very much the opposite. In almost every engagement in which he participated before he became emperor in 626 (and a different set of rules applied), Li Shimin placed himself at the head of the final, decisive cavalry charge and played a very active role in the cut and thrust of the melee. At Hulao he led his light cavalry in a charge against Dou Jiande's wavering host, then cut straight through the hostile mass with a small party of horsemen to display the Tang banner on a crest behind the enemy position. He later claimed that in all of his campaigns he had killed more than a thousand men by his own hand.[76] Li Shimin may have been especially promiscuous in this regard, but he was by no means unique. Li Mi was twice wounded by arrows, and there was a story that another rebel leader, Du Fuwei, once plunged into the ranks of the opposing army to seize a man who had just hit him with an arrow.[77] Dou Jiande was wounded by a lance thrust in the fighting at Hulao. And Yang Xuangan, the high-ranking official who had revolted against Emperor Yang in 613, "was valiant and very strong; each time he fought, he personally wielded the long lance and put himself at the front of his troops."[78] Military leaders of this period were trained to fight with bow, sword, and lance. Once battle had been joined, they tended to perform in a "motivational" rather than "coordinating" role by exposing themselves to danger in the front ranks. Leaders who did not behave in the right way risked losing the loyalty of their followers.[79]

Also noteworthy is the role of cavalry in Li Shimin's battles. Horses – and skilled horsemen – were often in short supply in agrarian China, and cavalry were a distinct minority in most Sui and Tang armies.[80] Despite their relatively small numbers, however, mounted troops usually played the decisive role on medieval Chinese battlefields. Their superior mobility enabled them to maneuver to attack the flank or rear, or to quickly exploit any openings that might appear in the enemy line; their height advantage made it easy for them to intimidate the opposing infantry, to throw them into panic-stricken flight with a sudden charge, or bull their way into and through the dense throngs of foot soldiers. Before the battle cavalry were needed for scouting and could be used for raids on the enemy's supply convoys; after the battle, they were essential for an effective pursuit.[81] In virtually all of Li Shimin's major engagements the decisive blow

was struck by cavalry, and when the Tang prince joined the fray himself it was at the head of his elite corps of 1000 horsemen dressed in black clothing and black armor.[82] In contrast to the heavily armored cavalry of the Sui dynasty and earlier, the horsemen led by Li Shimin and other Tang commanders are often described as "light cavalry" – meaning that the rider was still armored but the horse was not.[83] It is possible that this change was due to the fact that the Tang army began as a Sui frontier force confronting the highly mobile light cavalry of the Eastern Turks; well before he plunged into China's internal conflict, the Tang founder Li Yuan selected 2000 of his mounted troops, equipped them in Turkish fashion, and trained them to fight in the Turkish manner.[84] Whatever its historical origin, the greater speed and mobility of the Tang light cavalry must have contributed to the success of Li Shimin's raids and pursuits.

The great victory at Hulao was the single most decisive engagement of the civil wars that separated the Sui collapse from the consolidation of Tang authority. At one stroke, Li Shimin eliminated the two most dangerous rivals of the Tang regime, cemented Tang control over Henan, and – if only briefly – brought Hebei into the fold as well. After Hulao, the ultimate outcome of the civil wars was not seriously in doubt. As great as Li Shimin's contribution was, however, it did not bring an immediate end to the conflict. Other Tang foes remained active on the steppe frontier and in the south, and Tang armies continued to campaign on a number of fronts. Li Shimin could not be everywhere at once. Significant contributions were also made by other generals, among whom two of the most prominent were Li Xiaogong and Li Jing.

Li Xiaogong, a second cousin of Li Shimin, was one of the many kinsmen that Li Yuan appointed to major military commands or sent on important diplomatic missions after taking control of the capital at the end of 617. His assignment was to Sichuan, where no major rebel leader had emerged and the Sui officials holding the urban centers had been persuaded to submit to Tang envoys in 618. Possession of Sichuan then provided the Tang with a strategic base from which to launch an attack on the Liang revivalist Xiao Xian, who was then holding the middle Yangzi region and the far south. Li Xiaogong was made area commander of Xinzhou in southeastern Sichuan in 619, and in the following year he was ordered to build warships and practice water combat in preparation for a descent through the Yangzi gorges on the model of Yang Su's campaign of 588–9.[85] Since he had no prior military experience, another officer named Li Jing was made chief of staff for the expeditionary army. The son of a Sui commandery governor, Li Jing was also the nephew of the great Sui general Han Qinhu, one of the conquerors of Chen in 589, and was

said to have been a remarkably clever youth who was well acquainted with the contents of the ancient military treatises. He had been the deputy governor of a Sui commandery before he was accepted into the Tang ranks. It was apparently his idea to launch the campaign against Xiao Xian in the autumn of 621, when the Yangzi was in spate and the Liang ruler had temporarily sent most of his soldiers back to their homes because he believed himself safe from attack during the season when the gorges were most difficult to navigate.[86] The Tang fleet led by the two Lis disposed of Xiao's upriver flotilla in a battle at the mouth of the Qing River, and descended swiftly to Jiangling before the dispersed Liang forces could be brought back to defend their capital. After all of the troops that he had on hand were defeated in a battle outside the walls, Xiao Xian capitulated on November 10, 621. Li Xiaogong and Li Jing would spend the next few years extending and consolidating Tang control over vast territories in the far south, including the modern provinces of Hunan, Guizhou, Guangxi, and Guangdong as well as the northern part of Vietnam.[87]

On the plains of North China, sporadic fighting continued for nearly two years after the battle of Hulao. Before the end of June 621, the Tang execution of Dou Jiande in the marketplace of Chang'an provoked a group of his former generals to rise against the victors on the assumption that the same fate was being prepared for them. They put forward Dou's cavalry commander Liu Heita as their new leader, and Xu Yuanlang, a Shandong bandit chieftain who had earlier submitted to Tang, now threw in his lot with the rebels.[88] This new anti-Tang coalition quickly reclaimed the territories that had been controlled by Dou Jiande. It was not until the end of 622, after the Tang armies had fought three more major campaigns, that Hebei was finally pacified, and Xu Yuanlang was not defeated and killed until the spring of 623. In the south, the last major fighting occurred along the lower Yangzi in the spring of 624, when Li Xiaogong and Li Jing crushed the rebellion that had been started by Du Fuwei's lieutenant Fu Gongshi the previous autumn. Along the northern frontier, some opponents of Tang rule managed to hold out even longer because of strong backing from the Eastern Turks. Liang Shidu, the master of Shuofang in the Ordos region south of the Yellow River bend, was not eliminated until June 3, 628. His demise marked the end of overt, armed resistance to Tang authority in China proper, but it would take much longer to repair the damage that had been done by the civil wars of the Sui–Tang transition.

Notes

1 This subject is addressed in Howard J. Wechsler, *Mirror to the Son of Heaven: Wei Cheng at the Court of T'ang T'ai-tsung* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 31–2, and idem, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*, pp. 55, 68–9.

2 Elizabeth Perry has pointed to the distinction between "predatory" and "protective" strategies in rural China in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; see her *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845–1945* (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1980), pp. 3–4. Tanigawa Michio adopts essentially the same typology as Perry in his article, "Zui matsu no nairan to minshuo: hyoraku to jiei," *Toyoshi kenkyuo*, 53.4 (1995), pp. 173–92.

3 For Dou Jiande, see *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 54, p. 2234; *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 85, p. 3696; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, pp. 5656–7; and Hu Rulei, "Lue lun Li Mi," p. 55. For Zhai Rang, see *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 67, p. 2483, and *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 183, p. 5707.

4 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 56, p. 2275.

5 Zang Rong, "Lun Dou Jiande de chenggong yu shibai," in *Zhongguo nongmin zhanzheng shi yanjiu jikan*, No. 3 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1983), p. 69.

6 For more on these local protective forces, see Huang Huixian, "Lun Sui mo Tang chu de 'Shandong haojie,'" in *Zhongguo nongmin zhanzheng shi luncong*, vol. 5 (n.p.: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1987), pp. 61–77, and idem, "Sui mo nongmin qiyi wuzhuang qianxi," pp. 190, 196.

7 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 69, p. 2521.

8 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 83, p. 2777.

9 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 59, pp. 2330–1.

10 Huang Huixian, "Lun Sui mo Tang chu de Shandong haojie," p. 116.

11 Qi Xia, "You guan Sui mo nongmin qiyi de jige wenti," in Li Guangbi et al. (eds), *Zhongguo nongmin qiyi lunji* (Beijing: Sanlian, 1958), p. 109.

12 For Dou Jiande, see *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 54, pp. 2236–7; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 183, p. 5715; ch. 185, pp. 5804–5; and Zang Rong, "Lun Dou Jiande de chenggong yu shibai," p. 69. For Meng Haigong, see *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 182, p. 5669.

13 See Li Mi's biographies in *Sui shu*, ch. 70, pp. 1624–32; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 53, pp. 2207–24; and *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 84, pp. 3677–84. The development of Li Mi's political-military organization is covered in some detail in Graff, "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition," pp. 245–60 and 269–80.

14 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 183, p. 5722.

15 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 183, p. 5727; the full text of Li's manifesto can be found in *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 53, pp. 2212–18.

16 For Wang's background and early life, see *Sui shu*, ch. 85, p. 1894, and *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 54, p. 2227. The struggle between Li Mi and the Sui forces under Wang Shichong is covered in some detail in Graff, "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition," pp. 260–80.

17 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 56, pp. 2266–8; also see Qi Xia, "You guan Sui mo nongmin qiyi de jige wenti," pp. 103–5.

18 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 56, pp. 2263–5.

19 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 55, pp. 2245–6; Bingham, *The Founding of the T'ang Dynasty*, p. 139.

20 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 56, p. 2280.

21 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 55, pp. 2252–3, 2280; Bingham, *The Founding of the T'ang Dynasty*, p. 138.

22 See Nunome Chofuo, "Ri En no kigi," in idem, *Zui To shi kenkyuo* (Kyoto: Toyoshi kenkyuokai, Kyoto University, 1968), pp. 101–49, especially pp. 112, 125, 132, and 141.

23 One of these battles is analyzed in David A. Graff, "The Battle of Huo-i," *Asia Major* (third series) 5.1 (1992), pp. 33–55.

24 This follows *Sui shu*, ch. 85, p. 1897. Some sources such as Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 186, p. 5809 give 2000 cavalry, but the smaller number seems more plausible in light of the short commons inside Luoyang.

25 Again following *Sui shu*, ch. 85, p. 1897, rather than the more elaborate variants in *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 85, p. 3692, and Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 186, p. 5809.

26 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 68, p. 2503; also see *Sui shu*, ch. 85, p. 1894.

27 For Wang's advance to battle, see *Sui shu*, ch. 85, p. 1897; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 54, p. 2230; and Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 186, p. 5809. The canal is described in Xu Song, *Tang liang jing chengfang kao*, ch. 5, p. 40b, in Hiraoka Takeo (ed.), *Todai no Choan to Rakuyo* (Kyoto: Jimbunkagaku kenkyuosho, Kyoto University, 1956), and Gu Zuyu, *Du shi fangyu jiyao* (1879 Sichuan Tonghua shuwu edition; rpt. Taipei: Xinxing shuju, 1967), ch. 48, pp. 16b and 27b.

28 *Sui shu*, ch. 70, p. 1632; *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 186, p. 5809. Graff, "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition," pp. 298–9, deals with the size of Li Mi's army.

29 The council of war is described in *Sui shu*, ch. 70, pp. 1633–4, and *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 186, pp. 5809–10.

30 *Sui shu*, ch. 70, p. 1632, and ch. 85, p. 1897; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 68, p. 2503; *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 186, p. 5810.

31 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 186, pp. 5810–11.

32 This account of the battle is based on Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 186, pp. 5810–11, checked against the earliest accounts in *Sui shu*, ch. 70, p. 1632, and ch. 85, p. 1897. The *Zizhi tongjian* attributes yet another stratagem to Wang Shichong: he had a man who looked like Li Mi trussed up and, when the battle was at its most intense, had him led out in front of the army to convince his men that Li had been captured. This story is not very plausible and does

not appear in the *Sui shu*. For a more thorough examination of the evidence, see Graff, "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition," pp. 306–12.

33 *Sui shu*, ch. 85, p. 1898.

34 *Sui shu*, ch. 70, p. 1632, and Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 186, p. 5812. The modern historian Wang Qian pointed to the tensions within Li Mi's leadership group as the key to understanding his defeat; see *Wang Qian Sui Tang shi lungao*, ed. Tang Changru (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1983), pp. 245–6, 265–7.

35 Peter A. Boodberg, "The Art of War in Ancient China" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1930), pp. xix–xx.

36 *Sui shu*, ch. 70, p. 1624; ch. 85, p. 1894; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 54, p. 2227.

37 Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, ch. 92, pp. 2615–17, translated by John DeFrancis in "Biography of the Marquis of Huai-yin," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 10.2 (Sept. 1947), pp. 189–94. For further analysis of the battle, see Kierman, "Phases and Modes of Combat in Early China," p. 56 ff.

38 *Sunzi jiao shi*, ed. Wu Jiulong (Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 1990), p. 197. This is my translation from Chapter 11 of the *Sunzi* ("Jiu di"). Here and elsewhere my rendering of passages from the classic has been influenced by earlier translators such as Lionel Giles, Ralph Sawyer, and Kidder Smith's "Denma Translation Group."

39 For a more extensive discussion of these issues, see Graff, "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition," pp. 317–41.

40 For Li Shimin's age, see Bingham, *The Founding of the Tang Dynasty*, p. 124; for his role in 617, see Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 184, p. 5756, and Graff, "The Battle of Huo-i."

41 For a somewhat speculative discussion of Li Shimin's youthful reading, see Huang Yongnian, *Tang Taizong Li Shimin* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1987), p. 6. For a discussion of the exaggeration of Li Shimin's contribution to the Tang founding and the reasons for it, see Wechsler, *Mirror to the Son of Heaven*, pp. 8–32.

42 Graff, "The Battle of Huo-i," especially pp. 51–2; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 184, p. 5748; and ch. 188, pp. 5902–3. There are many other examples.

43 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 185, p. 5801. Almost all the traditional accounts place the blame on Shimin's subordinates, but some modern scholars suspect a cover-up; see Huang Yongnian, *Tang Taizong Li Shimin*, pp. 17–18.

44 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 186, pp. 5820–2; Du You, *Tong dian*, ch. 155, p. 3972.

45 The campaign is described in Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 188, pp. 5872–5, 5880–1. Also see Wang Qian, *Wang Qian Sui Tang shi lungao*, p. 253 ff.

46 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 188, pp. 5885–8.

47 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 188, pp. 5889, 5895–6; Wang Qinruo et al., *Cefu yuangui* (Taipei: Taiwan Zhonghua shuju, 1967), ch. 19, pp. 10b–11a.

48 This overview is a composite assembled from Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 188, pp.

5888–91, 5893–5, and 5897; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 2, p. 26; *Cefu yuangui*, ch. 19, pp. 11a–12a, and ch. 164, pp. 11b–12a; and Li Fang et al., *Taiping yulan*, ch. 109, p. 3a, in *Guoxue jiben congshu* (Taipei: Xinxing shuju, 1959).

49 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 54, p. 2233.

50 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 188, p. 5902; *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 92, p. 3808, and ch. 94, p. 3837.

51 The battle is described in Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 188, pp. 5902–3.

52 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 188, pp. 5896–7.

53 Huang, *Tang Taizong Li Shimin*, p. 28; also see Harro von Senger, *The Book of Stratagems* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1991), pp. 125, 130.

54 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 188, p. 5905, ch. 189, p. 5908; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 54, p. 2241.

55 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 189, pp. 5909–10; for analyis of Shimin's decision, see Graff, "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition," pp. 372–81.

56 C. P. Fitzgerald, *Son of Heaven: A Biography of Li Shih-min, Founder of the T'ang Dynasty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), p. 80. I visited Sishui myself in May 1993. The only way in which I would emend Fitzgerald's admirable description is to say that the eastern escarpment is more than twenty meters even at its lowest point and did not strike me as being the least bit "low."

57 Dou's camp was located very close to the point where the Yongji Canal from Hebei entered the Yellow River. The influence of logistics on Dou's choices is considered in Graff, "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition," pp. 387–95.

58 For the raids, see *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 54, p. 2241; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 189, p. 5913; and *Cefu yuangui*, ch. 420, p. 19a. For Li Shimin's efforts to give an impression of weakness, see *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 2, p. 27; *Tong dian*, ch. 159, p. 4084; and Zhao Dongjie et al., *Sishui xian zhi* (Rpt. Taipei: Chongwen chubanshe, 1968), ch. 10, p. 4a, which gives the text of a Tang stele erected on the battlefield.

59 This reconstruction of Dou's deployment is based on evidence presented in Graff, "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition," pp. 402–5. Accounts of the battle are found in Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 189, pp. 5913–15; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 2, p. 27, and ch. 54, p. 2242; *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 85, p. 3702; *Cefu yuangui*, ch. 19, pp. 12b–13a; *Tong dian*, ch. 155, p. 3978, and ch. 159, p. 4084; *Taiping yulan*, ch. 107, p. 12a, ch. 109, p. 4a–b, ch. 289, pp. 3b–4b, and ch. 331, p. 11a–b; and the 659 stele inscription preserved in Zhao Dongjie, *Sishui xian zhi*, ch. 10, pp. 3a–5a.

60 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 2, p. 27.

61 Here I follow *Tong dian*, ch. 155, p. 3978, and the 659 stele inscription in *Sishui xian zhi*, ch. 10, p. 4b.

62 Following *Tong dian*, ch. 155, p. 3978; *Taiping yulan*, ch. 289, p. 4a; *Cefu yuangui*, ch. 19, p. 13a; and *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 2, p. 27.

63 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 2, p. 27; *Tong dian*, ch. 155, p. 3978; *Cefu yuangui*, ch. 19, p. 13a; and *Taiping yulan*, ch. 289, p. 4a.

64 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 60, p. 2353; *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 78, p. 3518.

65 The stele incription hints at the arrival of the southern column; see *Sishui xian zhi*, ch. 10, p. 4b.

66 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 189, p. 5914; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 54, p. 2242; *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 85, p. 3702.

67 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 189, pp. 5915–16.

68 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 54, p. 2242, ch. 63, p. 2408; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 189, pp. 5918–20.

69 Others have made much the same observation. Perhaps the earliest was the Southern Song commentator Hu Sanxing (see Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 188, p. 5882). To Hu can be added C. P. Fitzgerald, *Son of Heaven*, pp. 83, 101; Shi Suyuan, "Cong san da zhanyi kan jiechu junjia Li Shimin," *Renwen zazhi*, 1982, No. 3, p. 97; Wan Jun, *Tang Taizong* (Shanghai: Xuexi shenghuo chubanshe, 1955), pp. 17–18; and Zhao Keyao and Xu Daoxun, *Tang Taizong zhuan* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1984), pp. 55–6.

70 Li Shimin did quote from the military classics later in life, after he became emperor in 626. For a detailed consideration of the evidence, see Graff, "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition," pp. 424–9.

71 *Sunzi jiao shi*, p. 53. My translation from Chapter 4 of the *Sunzi* ("Xing pian").

72 *Sunzi jiao shi*, pp. 60–1. My translation from Chapter 4 of the *Sunzi*. This idea is also expressed elsewhere in the text, as, for example, in Chapter 11 ("Jiu di"), p. 214: "When the enemy opens the gate, one must swiftly enter."

73 *Sunzi jiao shi*, p. 216. My translation from Chapter 11 of the *Sunzi*.

74 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 198, p. 6253.

75 For these battles, see *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 2, p. 25, and Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 188, pp. 5902–3.

76 Dong Hao (comp.), *Quan Tang wen* (Taipei: Jingwei shuju, 1965), ch. 4, p. 25a.

77 Li Fang, *Taiping guangji* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1959), ch. 191, p. 1431.

78 *Sui shu*, ch. 70, p. 1618.

79 For the distinction between motivation and coordination, see Martin van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 43. In *The Mask of Command* (New York: Viking, 1987), John Keegan argues that the effectiveness of military commanders is in large measure dependant on their ability to play the culturally determined roles expected by their followers. Wang Shichong, who is not known to have participated in combat, was detested by many of his subordinates; see *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 54, pp. 2231–3; ch. 68, p. 2503.

80 Graff, "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition," pp. 170–5.

81 The many functions of Tang-period cavalry are explored in Li Shu-t'ung, "Tangdai zhi junshi yu ma," in idem, *Tang shi yanjiu* (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1979), pp. 231–76.

82 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 188, p. 5901.

83 See Yang Hong, *Zhongguo gu bingqi luncong*, pp. 58–9, and idem, *Gudai bingqi shihua* (Shanghai: Shanghai kexue jishu chubanshe, 1988), pp. 144–5, 153–5.

84 See Wen Daya, *Da Tang chuangye qi ju zhu* (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 1983), ch. 1, p. 2; Dien, "A Study of Early Chinese Armor," p. 41; and David A. Graff, "Strategy and Contingency in the Tang Defeat of the Eastern Turks, 629–630" (forthcoming).

85 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 60, pp. 2347–8.

86 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 67, pp. 2475–6.

87 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 67, pp. 2476–7; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 189, pp. 5934–5.

88 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 55, pp. 2258, 2261.

CHAPTER NINE
The early Tang military and the expeditionary armies

The contrast between the population figures recorded by the Sui government and those dating from the early period of Tang rule is startling. In 609, before Emperor Yang's Korean campaigns and the great rebellions, the officially registered population of the empire stood at 8,907,546 households and 46,019,956 individuals. Approximately three decades later, in an unspecified year between 634 and 643, the corresponding figures were only 2,874,249 households and some 12 million individuals.[1] Banditry remained a serious problem in some parts of China long after the defeat of Tang's last major military rivals, and there were reports of widespread devastation, with vast areas said to be almost devoid of human habitation. In 632, the Tang minister Wei Zheng painted the following picture of conditions in Henan, formerly one of China's most populous regions: "From the Yi and Luo rivers east to the seacoast, there is an immense wasteland of weeds and rushes. The crowd of humanity has disappeared; the sounds of chickens and dogs are no longer heard."[2] This was, however, a considerable exaggeration, crafted for maximum rhetorical effect within the context of policy advocacy. While flood, drought, famine, banditry, and war had all taken their toll in the intervening years, the actual population of China could not have been reduced by nearly three-quarters. For the most part, the discrepancy between the Sui and early Tang figures is thought to reflect not mortality but the state's loss of administrative control over its people.[3] During the preceding years of chaos, people left their homes in large numbers and local government records must surely have been destroyed in many places. Cleaning up this mess would have been difficult enough under any circumstances, but in early Tang the situation was further complicated by the fact that in some parts of China the authority of the imperial court did not penetrate to the local level.

In the course of their struggle with the various other contenders for imperial power, the Tang leaders had found it not just expedient but essential to make deals with local powerholders. Whether bandits, local elites, or former Sui officials, when these local strongmen came over to the Tang side they were almost invariably granted titles and offices that allowed them to retain control of their existing territories and military forces. When necessary, the Tang founder created new units of local government to accommodate his new supporters, with

the result that the number of prefectures and counties in early Tang was said to be twice that of Sui.[4] Many of the leaders who were thus rewarded retained their local power for some years after the Tang victory. They were in a position to prevent the re-registration of population (thereby reserving for themselves revenues that would otherwise have been claimed by the center), and also had the ability to mobilize armed men in their territories. This was certainly the case in Henan and Hebei, the regions that had been most fought over during the civil wars. Early in 626, as the power struggle between Li Shimin and his elder brother Jiancheng, the heir apparent, intensified, Shimin sent one of his trusted followers to Luoyang with ample funds to buy the support of such local leaders, who were referred to as the "heroes east of the mountains."[5] It is possible that they continued to block the court's access to local resources well into the second half of the seventh century.[6] Their continued existence must have been tolerated by the center for a variety of reasons. All of them accepted the legitimacy of Tang rule, and very few (if any) were strong enough to present a serious military challenge to the new dynasty. Moreover, toleration facilitated economic recovery and the restoration of social order if only because it obviated the need for further military campaigns.

The most powerful of the local leaders were neutralized in various ways during the 620s. Some were executed on charges of treason or killed in the course of abortive rebellions, while many others were transferred to official posts outside of their home areas. Safely away from their old power bases, the latter generally became faithful servants of the new dynasty. Some of these men came from quite humble origins and represented an infusion of new blood into the aristocratic ruling elite of Sui times. One such figure was Zhang Shigui. Originally a leader of mountain bandits in the westernmost corner of Henan, Zhang submitted to Tang in 618 and was made prefect of his native Guozhou. He provided supplies for Tang forces on their way to fight in the Luoyang area, and was soon brought to court as a general of the imperial guards. He was then sent to Sichuan as a prefect, campaigned against the Liao people of the upper Yangzi highlands, and eventually served as chief administrator of the important prefectures of Youzhou (today's Beijing) and Yangzhou (the metropolis of the lower Yangzi region).[7] Zhang's literacy was apparently far below the aristocratic standard; on one occasion when he presented a passable entry at a court poetry contest, it was widely believed that he had engaged the services of a ghost writer.[8] An even more important figure than Zhang was Li Shiji. Born Xu Shiji, he came from a wealthy but uneducated farm family in eastern Henan. He was an early lieutenant of the bandit leader Zhai Rang and then Li Mi, and

when he surrendered an important granary and a number of commanderies to Tang after Li's defeat in 618, he was rewarded with the imperial surname. Li went on to play an important role in many of the military campaigns of the Tang consolidation, and later spent sixteen years as chief administrator at Bingzhou (Taiyuan), keeping a watchful eye on developments among the steppe peoples. In spite of his admitted illiteracy, Li ended his career as a chief minister under the third Tang emperor.[9]

After Li Shimin came to the throne in 626 by means of a coup in which he eliminated two of his brothers (including Jiancheng, the heir apparent) and forced his father Li Yuan to abdicate, he took steps to weaken the remaining local leaders. In the spring of 627, the new emperor (who would be known posthumously as Tang Taizong) ordered an administrative reorganization that abolished many of the new prefectures and counties that had been created to accommodate local strongmen who had submitted to Tang during the civil war period.[10] The grants of office that had been handed out so liberally a few years before were now being taken back. Men who had been prefects were demoted to county magistrates, and men who had been county magistrates lost their official standing entirely. From this time on, the center began to exercise greater control over local appointments.[11] The fact that there is no evidence of rebellion may be taken as either a measure of the degree of military control attained by the new dynasty, or a sign that the state continued to turn a blind eye toward the exercise of informal power by local strongmen at the sub-bureaucratic level.

Taizong's efforts to repair the damage that the civil wars had done to the centralized structure of imperial government were paralleled by measures to heal the spiritual and psychological scars of the conflict. Despite the widespread acceptance of the Buddhist faith by the people of medieval China, Buddhist teachings enjoining non-violence and the avoidance of killing do not appear to have mitigated the ferocity of the fighting; some of the uprisings of the period were, in fact, led by Buddhist monks, and there is evidence that at least some monks participated in combat.[12] Once the conflict was over, however, the faith was enlisted by the state to help bring about closure. In the third month of 628 the new emperor held a Buddhist memorial service for those who had perished, and at the end of 629, on the advice of the monk Mingchan, he ordered the construction of monasteries on the sites of seven of his battles, so that monks would be able to offer prayers for the dead.[13] The name chosen for the one erected on the Hulao battlefield, "Temple of Equality in Commiseration" (*deng ci si*), clearly indicates that the fallen of both sides were to receive equal solicitude, thus helping to heal the divisions engendered by the civil

war.

The Tang empire was not, however, in a position to put aside arms and warfare. Although the country was now at peace internally, conflicts continued along the borders. At the time that the battlefield temples were being constructed, Tang armies were engaged in a major offensive campaign against the Eastern Turks. Back in 617, when their qaghan, Shibi, was supporting a number of different rebel leaders in order to keep China weak and divided, the Turks had provided Li Yuan with 2000 horses for his advance on the Sui capital.[14] Once the Tang founder had grown in strength and began to look like a winner, however, the Turks had thrown their support to Tang foes such as Liu Wuzhou in Shanxi (619) and Liu Heita in Hebei (622). After the elimination of the major Tang rivals within China, the Turks, now led by Shibi's younger brother Xieli, entered the lists themselves and launched massive plundering expeditions against Shanxi and the northern borders of Guanzhong year after year from 623 to 626, perhaps in the hope of encouraging anti-Tang uprisings.[15] The great incursion of 626 carried all the way to the north bank of the Wei River only a few miles from Chang'an. Li Shimin, who had taken the throne only three weeks earlier, rode out to parley with Xieli on September 23. He put on a great show of bravado, but probably had to make a large payment to the Turks in order to secure their withdrawal.[16] In the immediate aftermath of the confrontation at the Wei River, the new emperor introduced a crash program of military training for his guardsmen in the capital; before the end of the year, he had issued another edict calling for military drills and maneuvers in the agricultural slack season after the autumn harvest and made inquiries about the possibility of increasing the size of the army by selecting underage males for military service.[17]

In the end, Taizong's revenge upon the Turks was made possible less by his own preparations than by a series of events that laid bare all of the weaknesses of the Turk polity. Xieli's expedition of 626 may have yielded a great deal of booty, but its failure to spark an uprising within China probably damaged the qaghan's prestige among his own people and especially among the subject tribes.[18] To this situation was added unusually severe weather on the Mongolian steppe at some point before the middle of October 627; possibly in the spring or early autumn of that year. Heavy snows covered the ground to a depth of several feet, preventing the nomads' livestock from grazing and causing a massive die-off among the animals. It is not clear whether tribal revolts against Xieli were already in progress by this time, but the natural catastrophe surely contributed to political unrest. According to one Chinese source, losses to his herds prompted the qaghan to make new demands on subject tribes that were themselves

hard-pressed, and this in turn pushed the hungry nomads into rebellion.[19] Whatever the exact sequence of events, the snowstorms and famine of 627 dramatically demonstrated the ecological vulnerability of even the strongest steppe empire, dependant as it was on the survival of its herds and unable to store surpluses from one year to the next in the manner of agrarian China.

By the summer of 628, many of the subordinate peoples of the Turk empire were in open revolt. Especially threatening to Xieli's Turks were the Xueyantuo, the most powerful of the Turkic Tiele tribes that inhabited the territory north of the Gobi Desert. Failure to put down these uprisings led to a fatal division within the Turks' ruling Ashina clan. Xieli sent his nephew Tuli, a subordinate qaghan ruling over the tribes of eastern Mongolia and southwestern Manchuria, to put down the rebels. When Tuli returned in defeat, Xieli had him confined for ten days and flogged. The next time that Xieli tried to levy troops from his following, Tuli refused to provide them – which prompted Xieli to attack him in the spring of 628. The civil war within the Ashina clan was made possible and even likely because of the ambiguous succession system practiced by the Turks. Rule was normally passed from brother to brother, but there was no clear standard for adjudicating the competing claims of members of the next generation. As the son of Shibi Qaghan, Xieli's elder brother and predecessor, Tuli was in a position to claim the throne as "the representative of the genealogically senior line who was now of age."[20] And Tuli had the wherewithal to challenge Xieli because of the Turks' practice of creating "subordinate qaghans" to rule as satraps over vast portions of the empire precisely as a means of placating the offspring of previous qaghans who had been passed over for the succession.[21] The Tang emperor was apparently well aware of the fissiparous nature of the Turk polity, and did not miss opportunities to promote and exploit divisions. When Tuli requested Taizong's support in the fourth lunar month of 628, the emperor ordered one of his frontier commanders to give direct military assistance to Tuli and sent another general to Taiyuan to begin preparations for a major offensive against Xieli.[22]

By the autumn of 629, the preparations appear to have been complete, and Taizong may also have been encouraged by diplomatic communications with the Xueyantuo, who now dominated the territory north of the Gobi Desert. On September 11, he appointed his minister of war, Li Jing, to be commander-in-chief of the expeditionary army that would march against the Turks, and on December 13 he gave the order for the offensive to begin.[23] The Tang forces advanced in six major columns, with a distance of no less than 720 miles separating the easternmost and westernmost columns. Most of these efforts probably aimed to pin down regional Turkish leaders

so they would not be able to come to Xieli's assistance. The main blow was to be struck by the central column directly under the control of Li Jing, working in very close cooperation with another column under Li Shiji.[24] Li Jing advanced northward from Mayi toward the frontier town of Dingxiang, around which Xieli and his followers were camped. In a move that took the Turks completely by surprise, Li advanced with 3000 light cavalry to occupy a ridge south of Dingxiang. When the Tang troops made a night attack on the town and penetrated the outer wall, Xieli retreated northward to a place called Iron Mountain. His decision to abandon Dingxiang was probably influenced by the approach of Li Shiji's column from the east and the threat that this force posed to his path of retreat.[25]

Li Jing and Li Shiji joined forces at the Baidao Pass, between Dingxiang and Iron Mountain, and a lull ensued in the campaign as Xieli sued for peace and Taizong responded by sending an envoy from Chang'an to the Turkish camp to negotiate the terms of his submission.[26] During this time, the two Tang generals hit upon the idea of making a surprise attack on the Turks now that they had let down their guard. They did not seek authorization from the emperor (who was more than 600 miles away by road), nor did they attempt to inform the Tang ambassador of their plan.[27] Li Jing set out for the Turkish camp with a force of 10,000 cavalry, while Li Shiji took a separate column to block the route that the Turks would have to take if they wanted to escape northward across the desert. As Li Jing's men neared Xieli's camp on March 27, 630, a mist screened their approach until they were only a short distance away from their quarry. When the Turks finally became aware of their plight, it was too late to organize an effective defense. The Tang vanguard charged directly toward the qaghan's tent, cutting down dozens of Turks and throwing the entire camp into confusion. Xieli chose to make his escape on a fast horse, accompanied by just a few followers. With him went all hope of resistance. The "battle" at Iron Mountain was apparently little more than a one-sided slaughter. Chinese accounts report that some 10,000 of the nomads were killed and more than 100,000 men and women submitted to the victors.[28] Many of these survivors probably surrendered when they ran into Li Shiji's blocking position at the southern end of the path across the Gobi.[29] Li Jing later faced charges for allowing his troops to plunder the Turkish camp, but was never punished for taking military action – apparently in contravention of the emperor's wishes – while negotiations were in progress.[30] Taizong was clearly delighted with the outcome, regardless of the means by which it had been obtained. It is also noteworthy that the Tang victory over the Eastern Turks had been won by fast-moving forces of light cavalry resembling those of the Turks themselves. Had the Chinese

relied upon their more numerous infantry forces, it would have been all but impossible to surprise the Turks, catch up with them, or prevent their escape.

The Iron Mountain campaign spelled the end of the Eastern Turk qaghanate and marked the beginning of half a century of Chinese dominance over the Mongolian steppe. Most of the remaining Turk leaders soon surrendered to Tang, and one of them delivered the fugitive Xieli into the hands of Tang officers on May 12, 630.[31] A few groups of Eastern Turks continued to hold out in the far northwest, but the major power north of the Gobi was now Taizong's ally, the qaghan of the Xueyantuo. After considerable debate at the Tang court, a decision was made to settle the surrendered Turks on marginal lands along the northern border, with the majority apparently concentrated in the Ordos region south of the Yellow River bend.[32] The surrendered Turks were treated with great care. Although nominally organized into prefectures and protectorates within the Chinese administrative system, the tribesmen actually remained under the authority of their own chiefs, who received official appointments and other honors from the emperor. "Those of their chieftains and leaders who came to submit were all appointed to be generals, generals of the palace gentlemen, and other officers. More than one hundred of them were arrayed at court as officials above the fifth rank, and as a result several thousand families of Turks came to dwell in Chang'an."[33] Their presence contributed to the exotic, cosmopolitan flavor of the Tang capital, which was renowned for drawing people, goods, and fashions from many parts of Asia.[34] They also made a major contribution to the military power of Tang China. A number of the Turk leaders who had been made generals of the imperial guards later commanded Tang armies on campaign and played a major role in the subjugation of peoples farther to the north and west. The armies they commanded would include large numbers of their fellow Turks.[35]

The sources do not provide us with many details regarding the composition of the Tang army that defeated the Eastern Turks, but it must certainly have included a large number of soldiers from the regimental headquarters (*fubing*).[36] The system of locally based territorial regiments, the mainstay of the Northern Zhou and Sui military, had collapsed together with the Sui dynasty, as various contenders for power "privatized" the units under their command, but the Tang leaders began to reconstruct it in Guanzhong as early as 619 and then extended the system to other regions. This task was nearly complete by the early 630s. The Tang *fubing* system probably differed very little from the Sui system under Emperor Yang, but far more is known about the workings of the Tang system.[37] The structure rested on several hundred military units of approximately 800 men each,

based in designated prefectures and locally recruited. After a great many changes in nomenclature, these units, which had been known as "soaring hawk regimental headquarters" under Emperor Yang, received the lasting designation of "assault-repulsing regimental headquarters" (*zhechong fu*) in 636, when their commanders became "assault-repulsing colonels" (*zhechong duwei*). Each regiment was affiliated with one of the twelve imperial guard commands in the capital, where its men were supposed to perform one-month tours of guard duty according to a complex schedule of rotation. The more distant a unit from the capital, the greater the number of shifts into which it was divided and, consequently, the less often each individual soldier's turn would come up. Regiments within 166 miles of the capital were divided into five shifts, for example, while those between 166 and 333 miles away were formed into seven shifts. The number of "guardsmen" (*weishi*) present in the capital at any given time may have been in the neighborhood of 50,000.[38] Guardsmen might also be sent to frontier garrisons for periods of up to three years, but this sort of duty was neither as universal nor as systematic as the regular rotational service in Chang'an.[39]

When not on guard duty or campaign, the soldiers were expected to support themselves through farming. In exchange for limited exemption from taxes and corvée, they were supposed to furnish all of their own provisions and much of their own equipment. Men were enlisted as *fubing* at the age of twenty-one and continued to serve until sixty. The local civil authorities selected new soldiers every three years from among the eligible males in the community on the basis of the three criteria of wealth, strength, and number of adult males in the household. The intention was evidently to place the burden of military service on those who could best afford it. However, some prefectures had so many regiments that it would have been impossible for them to meet their quotas had they not been able to induct young men from poor families. Surviving Tang household registers from the northwestern frontier area of Dunhuang indicate that guardsmen from the lowest socioeconomic strata far outnumbered those from better-off families.[40] Nevertheless, service as a *fubing* must have had some attraction for ambitious men from wealthy families. In addition to the local prestige and status that came from serving the emperor as guardsmen, they also had the opportunity to acquire honorific ranks through their exploits on the battlefield, ranks which entitled them to hold more land than would normally be allotted them by the state under the "equal-field system" of land tenure.[41]

Due to the fact that they combined military service with farming, the *fubing* have sometimes been characterized as a "militia" by Western authors. With its connotations of low quality and ineffectiveness

(especially on account of the implied contrast with a "professional" soldiery), this term is rather misleading when used in connection with the *fubing*. Given their life-long military service and the training they received over that period, it would be more accurate to view them as a special type of professional soldier.[42] Each man is supposed to have been fully equipped with a panoply that included armor, bow and arrows, saber, and lance. He was expected to practice certain martial skills, such as archery, on a daily basis, and every winter, during the agricultural slack season, he would join his comrades for an intensive period of organized drill during which the regimental commander would deploy the men in battlefield formations, hold mock combats, and teach cooperation and coordination by leading them on large-scale hunts.[43] There is little doubt that the *fubing* were highly effective on the battlefield during the seventh century.[44]

The number of *fubing* regimental headquarters changed over time. The maximum of 633 regiments (approximately 600,000 soldiers) was attained in the early years of the eighth century, when the system was already in decline. A modern authority on the *fubing* has argued that only 353 regiments had been created by the year 636.[45] The great majority of these were concentrated in areas close to the capital, while vast stretches of central, eastern, and southern China were almost entirely without regimental headquarters. Of the 353 regiments, no less than 261 were located in the Guanzhong region, and many of the remaining 92 were probably situated in nearby areas such as Hedong (modern Shanxi province), the original base of the Tang founder Li Yuan. Of the more than 320 prefectures that made up the Tang empire, more than two-thirds never contained as much as a single regiment of *fubing*. Those that did, however, were often home to a great many of them. This was especially true in Guanzhong, where the metropolitan prefecture around Chang'an eventually contained 131 regiments and several other nearby prefectures were also very heavily burdened.[46] Even in regions with relatively few regiments, those units tended to be geographically concentrated. All of the regiments in Henan, for example, were located in Luoyang or adjacent prefectures, with none established in the plains to the east. The burden of service was thus very unevenly distributed. Inhabitants of prefectures without regiments were never called upon to serve as *fubing*, while in some of the more highly militarized prefectures in the northwest it would seem that almost every able-bodied adult male was a soldier.[47]

No Tang source provides a clear rationale for this highly imbalanced distribution of *fubing*. Explanations proposed by modern scholars include the necessity of protecting the approaches to the capital and the need to make sure that enough troops were available within a reasonable distance to provide an adequate pool of manpower to

support the system of rotational guard duty.[48] It has also been argued that this pattern was simply a historical legacy of the Tang regime's origin in the northwest; most of the men of the original Tang armies came from Guanzhong and Hedong, and regimental headquarters were set up in their home communities to accommodate them when they returned from the civil war.[49] Continued adherence to this pattern even decades later, however, suggests that the Tang founders – northwestern aristocrats and the political heirs of Yuwen Tai's Guanzhong-based regime of the sixth century – simply did not trust the people of the eastern plain.[50] This impression is reinforced by the distribution of the few regiments that *were* set up in the east and south. There is a very high correlation between the locations of the regiments and areas that were early centers of support for the Tang cause or served as headquarters for Tang regional commanders during the pacification of the east and south.[51] In other words, these were relatively loyal and reliable forward bases from which the surrounding areas – with no regularly established military units of their own – could be dominated and policed.

This would not have been the only respect in which the early Tang military system placed a strong emphasis on control. The mechanism of rotational service itself guaranteed that the generals of the imperial guards would have no opportunity to establish lasting personal ties with the guardsmen passing through the capital on their one-month tours of duty, and therefore would not have the means to pose a threat to the dynasty. Other checks and safeguards were established to insure that the local regiments could not be used against the center by local leaders. The mobilization and deployment of troops from one of the "assault-repulsing regimental headquarters" normally required the dispatch of tallies from the capital. The tally was made of copper, in the shape of a fish, and carried the name of the regiment and its parent guard command. One half was kept by the Credentials Office of the imperial Chancellery, the other was kept by the regimental headquarters. When the tally arrived from the capital it was matched with the local half in the presence of both the regimental commander and the prefect, and only then were troops sent out in accordance with the accompanying imperial order. A commander who moved as few as ten men without permission was subject to one year of penal servitude, while a colonel who mobilized an entire regiment of 1000 men might face death by strangulation.[52]

The method of forming campaign armies also worked to prevent generals from turning the troops under their command into personal followers. When the situation demanded, ad hoc "expeditionary armies" (*xingjun*) were assembled from the local regiments and various other troop sources and placed under the command of generals

dispatched from the imperial guard headquarters at Chang'an; once the emergency was over, the troops returned to their prefectures and the generals to the capital.[53] Expeditionary armies ranged in size from about 3000 men to upwards of 100,000, depending upon the anticipated difficulty of their assignments. The largest such forces consisted of several separate columns, each with its own "expeditionary army commander" (*xingjun zongguan*). One of them would be designated as "expeditionary army commander-in-chief" (*xingjun da zongguan*) with overall authority to coordinate the operations of his fellows (it was in this capacity that Li Jing was sent against the Eastern Turks in 629).[54] The soldiers of the expeditionary armies were drawn from several sources. The "assault-repulsing regimental head-quarters" were one of these sources, but too much use of *fubing* threatened to disrupt the schedules of rotation and weaken the garrison of the capital. For this reason, the *fubing* were often supplemented with short-term conscripts. These troops, known as "conscript-recruits" (*bingmu*), were usually drawn from those prefectures without regimental headquarters, which helped to spread the burden of military service a little more evenly among the population. They represented a far more flexible form of military manpower than the *fubing* since they could be called up in any numbers desired, often from areas nearest the scene of hostilities, and served only for the duration of the campaign.[55] A third major source of manpower for the expeditionary armies were tribal allies and auxiliaries, including the surrendered Eastern Turks. These warriors served under their own leaders, retained their own form of organization, and were responsible for their own equipment and supplies.[56] They were especially valuable – even essential – in campaigns against other steppe peoples, and accounted for the great majority of some expeditionary armies. In 651, for example, 30,000 Chinese soldiers and 50,000 Uighur tribesmen were mobilized to attack the qaghan of the Western Turks.[57]

An invaluable source of information on the functioning of the expeditionary armies and early Tang military practices in general is a treatise written by the great Li Jing himself. It no longer exists as a complete work, but large extracts have survived through their incorporation into the *Tong dian* (*Comprehensive Canons*), an encyclopedia of institutional history compiled by the scholar-statesman Du You in the second half of the eighth century.[58] The relevance of this material is not limited to the second quarter of the seventh century, since Li was almost certainly describing many practices that were not new in his own time and continued to be followed long afterward. Part of Li's work consisted of rather general advice on strategy; here he included many quotes and paraphrases

from the military classics of antiquity, and seems to have been operating entirely within the intellectual framework established by Sunzi. For example, great emphasis is placed on determining when the enemy is most vulnerable, in order to be able to choose just the right moment to engage him in a decisive battle. More interesting, because of their uniqueness and the unimpeachable authority of their source, are the passages that provide detailed information on army organization, combat drills, battlefield formations, scouting, signalling, basic tactics, march orders, and camp layouts.

According to Li Jing, a typical expeditionary army might consist of 20,000 men, broken down into seven divisions (*jun*) of between 2600 and 4000 men each. Only about two-thirds of the soldiers in each division – 14,000 for the entire army – are to be used as combat troops, with the balance left behind to guard the army's camp or baggage train. All of the divisions contain the same mix of specialized troops and weapon types, including archers (a total of 2200), crossbowmen (2000), and cavalry (4000). Li Jing's descriptions of infantry drills suggest that the remainder of the troops are probably supposed to be footsoldiers armed with spears.[59] Perhaps 60 percent of the total force of 20,000 is provided with armor.[60] At the time that Li was writing, the *fubing* regiments were divided into three to five battalions (*tuan*) of 200 men, each of which was further subdivided into two companies (*lü*) of a hundred men, four platoons (*dui*) of fifty men, and twenty squads (*huo*) of ten men.[61] The only one of these units that plays a meaningful tactical role in Li's treatise is the *dui*, which suggests that most levels of the *fubing* organizational hierarchy – including the regiment itself – were used mainly for personnel management rather than battlefield command and control.

For Li, the fifty-man platoon is the fundamental, irreducible unit for all deployment and maneuver. It has a full complement of five officers (commander, deputy, standard-bearer, and two color guards), and it is the smallest unit to be provided with a flag. It has a fixed battle formation five ranks deep in which each man has his assigned place; led by the flag, it is expected to advance, retreat, and maneuver as a body.[62] Though capable of independant manuever, a single *dui* of infantry was clearly too small to operate effectively by itself. Hence, it was brought together with other *dui* to create larger formations on the battlefield. While Li Jing's standard drill formation calls for the deployment of two lines of *dui* in a loose checkerboard pattern, he also gives instructions for joining varying numbers of *dui* more tightly together to form larger groupings of 150, 250, 450, and 500 men.[63] Six *dui* made a 300–man tactical unit called a *tong*; with one *dui* told off to guard the baggage, the remaining five could be deployed in several different configurations and assigned different combat roles on

an ad hoc basis.[64] When the entire army was deployed in a standard battle formation, the infantry was formed in two lines or echelons of equal strength while the cavalry was positioned to cover the flanks.[65] According to Li Jing, the cavalry were the army's "eyes and ears" and could also be used to pursue fugitives, exploit openings, and ride down dispersed enemy troops, while the infantry formed the stable core around which the cavalry could maneuver.[66]

Tactical commands were relayed to the troops by means of drums, horns, bells or gongs, and flag signals. Just as in antiquity, the beating of drums was the signal for an advance, while gongs or other metallic instruments signaled a halt or withdrawal. Li Jing provides the following example of signaling in his description of a military drill:

> At the end of the fourth sounding of the horn, the men of all the *dui* simultaneously draw in their spears and kneel on the ground. Their eyes watch the great yellow standard of the commander-in-chief, their ears listen for the sound of the drum. The yellow flag points forward, and the drum begins to beat; they shout in unison, "Wu-hu! Wu-hu!" and move forward together to the center line … When they hear the gong sound, they must stop shouting and fall back, carrying their spears on their shoulders.[67]

The commander of a Tang expeditionary army was supposed to have five flags, one in the color of each of the five directions, with which he could direct the movements of his troops. When two flags were crossed, for example, the *dui* were supposed to respond by combining into larger formations.[68]

Some sections of Li Jing's work touch on prohibitions and punishments. These could be extremely harsh, with many offenses punished by decapitation. The soldiers of Tang expeditionary armies were forbidden, on pain of death, from spreading superstitious rumors or bringing women into the army's camp. A standard bearer who damaged his unit's morale by failing to hold his flag straight was subject to decapitation, and any soldier who failed to advance when the signal was given was to be killed immediately by the man behind him. The first men to begin plundering after a battle was won also faced execution.[69] This last prohibition dovetails with the concern, repeated many times in Li Jing's work, that the army never relax its guard and expose itself to surprise, ambush, or sudden counterattack. In battle, troops were often divided into two echelons, with one assigned to attack the enemy while the other was held back to maintain a secure defensive position should the attack go awry. When the enemy retreated in battle, the Tang infantry were allowed to advance only a short distance. Then, if the retreat appeared genuine and not a ruse, the cavalry would be ordered to continue the pursuit.[70] When a Tang expeditionary army was campaigning in hostile territory, mounted scouts were sent out to the front, rear, and both flanks. In each of these directions, there were two men at a distance of five *li*, two more at ten *li*, and so on – out to a distance of thirty *li* (or ten miles).[71] These vedettes were to use flags to signal the

approach of the enemy, a method that would have been quite effective in the open grasslands of the north and west where so many of the early Tang expeditionary armies campaigned against a variety of peoples including Turks, Tuyuhun, and Xueyantuo.

The contents of Li Jing's manual are remarkably similar to what we find in Byzantine military treatises such as the *Strategikon* traditionally attributed to the Emperor Maurice (r. 582–602) and the *Tactica* of Emperor Leo VI (r. 886–912). The *Strategikon*, believed to have been written between 592 and 610, possibly by Maurice or a close associate, is a near contemporary of Li Jing's military writings.[72] It shows the same concern with battle formations, marching order, camp layouts, scouting, and discipline. Some prescriptions are almost exactly the same. For example, both Li Jing and the author of the *Strategikon* recommend the execution of soldiers who break ranks to engage in plundering.[73] Also noteworthy is the overall approach to battle. Like Li Jing and his intellectual antecedents, the author of the *Strategikon* urges caution when deciding whether or not to join battle: "To try simply to overpower the enemy in the open, hand to hand and face to face, even though you might appear to win, is an enterprise which is very risky and can result in serious harm."[74] Raids, ambushes, and all manner of tricks and stratagems are recommended instead. The Byzantine author of the *Strategikon* is if anything more cautious than Li Jing, suggesting that battle should be avoided entirely if one's aims can be accomplished by other means.[75]

For several decades after the defeat of the Eastern Turks in 630, Tang expeditionary armies won victory after victory. In 635 several columns operating under the overall command of Li Jing broke the power of the Tuyuhun, a nomadic people of mixed Xianbei and Tibetan stock who occupied the territory on the northeastern corner of the Tibetan plateau that is now the province of Qinghai.[76] In 641, after the Tang empire and the Xueyantuo had fallen out over Taizong's plan to return the surrendered Eastern Turks to the open steppe, Li Shiji inflicted a major defeat on these former allies in a battle at the Nuozhen River.[77] Another round of campaigning in 645–6 led to the flight and death of the Xueyantuo qaghan and his successor's submission to Tang. In 648, an expeditionary army led by the Turkish general Ashina She'er conquered the Indo-Iranian oasis kingdom of Kucha in the Tarim basin.[78] In the 650s, the focus of Chinese military operations shifted north and west, to the Western Turks and the lands around the Ili valley and Issyk-kul. There, in 657, a Tang army smashed the forces of the Western qaghan Shaboluo and – for the space of a few years, at least – extended Tang authority into Central Asia as far as the northeastern border of Persia.[79] Most of these campaigns were fought over vast distances remote from the borders of

China proper, and involved nomad allies and auxiliaries as well as Chinese troops. The Tang expeditionary forces typically launched relentless, long-range pursuits of defeated steppe leaders that drove them to death or oblivion, with no opportunity at all to recoup their losses. The campaigns were usually both short and decisive, and thus very well suited to the temporary, ad hoc nature of the expeditionary army organization.

It was only in the northeast that Tang arms met with a serious setback. In 641, no doubt encouraged by successes elsewhere and by the recovery of the empire from the devastation of the civil wars, Taizong began to contemplate the conquest of Koguryo on the grounds that its territory had once been an integral part of the Han empire. As the historian Howard Wechsler has suggested, his motives were probably much more complex; they may have included an ambition to outdo Emperor Yang of Sui, pragmatic concerns that Koguryo not be allowed to dominate the Korean peninsula and thereby pose a threat to northeastern China, and perhaps even an aging emperor's desire to escape from problems at court by getting back in the saddle and reliving the military triumphs of his youth.[80] He found a suitably righteous pretext for action the following year, when one of the great nobles of Koguryo, a man named Yon Kae-so-mun, killed the king and placed another member of the royal family on the throne as his puppet. Preparations for a major campaign began in earnest in 644. A great fleet of 500 ships was constructed on the southeastern coast and along the Yangzi River to transport 40,000 conscript-recruits and 3000 gentleman volunteers (drawn from the elite of the two capitals, Chang'an and Luoyang) across the sea from the Shandong peninsula to the Korean coast. At the same time, an army of 60,000 Chinese soldiers plus an unspecified number of tribal auxiliaries gathered at Youzhou on the northeastern frontier. This force, under the command of Li Shiji, would advance overland to the Liao River. Li's main body would eventually be reinforced by some 10,000 armored cavalry led by the emperor himself.[81] The relatively small size of these forces, with the sources mentioning no more than 113,000 combat troops traveling by both land and sea, suggests that Tang strategists had learned

Map 15 The Liao River valley and the Korean peninsula in the seventh century AD

from Emperor Yang's mistakes and had no wish to court disaster by bringing more men than they could feed. The road ahead, however, was no easier than it had been three decades before. Not only would the Tang troops face the same obstacles of climate, weather, and terrain that had hindered Sui efforts, but the manmade defenses east of the Liao River were even more formidable since Koguryo had spent nearly ten years erecting a strong new belt of fortifications along a front of several hundred miles from Puyosong (Fuyucheng; modern Siping) to the Liaodong peninsula.[82]

Li Shiji's army marched from its advanced base at Yingcheng (modern Chaoyang) in April of 645. On May 1, he surprised his opponents by crossing the Liao River farther north than they had expected. His first objective, the fortress of Kaemosong (Gaimoucheng), was invested on May 16 and fell after a siege of only eleven days, yielding 20,000 people and more than 100,000 *shi* (or six million liters) of grain. He

then turned southwest toward Ryotongsong (Liaodongcheng), the stronghold that had successfully defied Emperor Yang in 612 and 613. On June 7, he defeated a Korean army of 40,000 marching to the relief of the city, and a few days later he was joined by the emperor and his cavalry escort. Like Kaemosong, Ryotongsong was taken with surprising ease. On June 16, a favorable wind enabled the besiegers to set the entire city ablaze with incendiary projectiles, opening the way for a successful assault on the walls. The Tang army then advanced to Paekamsong (Baiyancheng), a short distance to the east of Ryotong, arriving under the walls on June 27. Here the commandant delivered the place into Tang hands. Taizong refused to permit his troops to loot the town and enslave its inhabitants, and when their leaders protested this departure from established military practice he undertook to reward the most deserving soldiers from his own purse. The emperor arrived outside Ansisong (Anshicheng), the next major fortress to the south, on July 18.[83] The following day, he was apprised of the approach of a large relief army of Koreans and Malgal. Deploying 15,000 men under Li Shiji as a bait to draw the Koreans, while concealing another force of comparable size in a position from which it could debouch into the enemy rear, Taizong inflicted a crushing defeat in the battle fought on July 20. The remnants of the Korean army retreated to a nearby hilltop where they were surrounded by the Chinese. The next day Taizong received the surrender of 36,800 men; the total bag also included 50,000 horses, 50,000 head of cattle, and 10,000 suits of iron armor. Of the prisoners, 3500 officers and chieftains were sent back to China, 3300 Malgal tribesmen were put to death, and the remainder of the ordinary Korean soldiers were freed and allowed to return to their homes.[84]

After this great victory, however, the Tang campaign began to encounter difficulties. Ansisong put up a more stubborn resistance than any of the other towns that Taizong had attacked. As the days and weeks passed and the end of the campaigning season drew closer, the Tang emperor several times considered the possibility of bypassing the fortress and either seeking softer targets or pressing deeper into Koguryo. Each time the scheme was rejected on account of the threat that the bypassed stronghold would pose to the Tang army's rear and its supply line to the grain stored at Ryotongsong.[85] Here, it seems, Taizong was paying the price for the relatively small size of his army which, unlike that of Emperor Yang, could not effectively mask the border fortresses at the same time as it moved deeper into the interior. Nor was the force that had gone to attack Koguryo from the sea of very much help at this juncture. Its commander had captured Pisasong (Beishacheng) on the Liaodong peninsula on June 1 and threatened several points along the coast, but he failed either to cooperate

effectively with the land army or to strike directly at Pyongyang.[86] The Tang army at Ansisong eventually staked everything on the construction of a huge mound to command the southeastern corner of the city wall. When a sudden sortie by the defenders took the mound – and three days of frantic assaults by Tang troops failed to dislodge them – Taizong decided to order a withdrawal on October 13. It was high time. His soldiers were already suffering from the cold weather, and the grain stocks at Ryotongsong were nearly exhausted. The sources do not mention the numbers lost by the Tang army, but its retreat so late in the season was a severe ordeal. The troops had to improve their road through the waterlogged Liao marshes with fascines and even sunken army carts, and bitter winds and snow near the end of October claimed many lives.[87]

In the wake of this fiasco, the Tang emperor briefly adopted a new strategy of sending generals with small, mobile forces to make harassing attacks on the Koguryo frontier, with the aim of wearing down the enemy by forcing them to maintain strong defenses and a high level of vigilance at all times. This approach achieved some success in the spring and summer of 647, when a ship-borne force of 10,000 men menaced the coastline while Li Shiji raided across the Liao River.[88] In the following year, however, Taizong ordered preparations for another large-scale campaign against Koguryo, preparations that were cut short only by his death in the sixth lunar month of 649.[89]

This did not mark the end of the conflict. Tensions between the Tang empire and Koguryo continued through the 650s. In the winter of 654 the Khitan people of southern Manchuria, then Tang clients, were attacked by Koguryo and the Malgal. The following spring, a Tang army crossed the Liao River and defeated a defending force near Sinsong. Further clashes occurred on the Liao frontier in 658 and 659. In 660, however, the pattern changed, as China again dispatched a major force to the Korean peninsula with the aim of landing a decisive blow. This move was prompted by a call for help from the kingdom of Silla, which occupied the southeastern portion of the Korean peninsula and had just suffered the loss of some of its frontier territories to incursions by both Koguryo and Paekche, the third of the Korean states.[90] The initial blow was aimed at the weaker partner, Paekche, which lay on the western coast of the peninsula. Su Dingfang, the officer who had led the Tang vanguard into Xieli's camp in 630, now brought a large army across the Yellow Sea to Paekche in the eighth lunar month of 660. He defeated a Paekche force at the mouth of the Kum River, then ascended the river to take the capital (near today's Kongju) and capture the ruling family. The kingdom of Paekche, with its thirty-seven commanderies, 200 walled towns, and 760,000

households, was divided into five area commands and annexed to the Tang empire.[91]

The next blow was aimed at Koguryo itself, which was now exposed to attack from several directions. The Tang government raised 44,000 conscript-recruits from sixty-seven prefectures in the North China Plain and sent them across the sea, again under Su Dingfang, to strike at the heart of Koguryo. Su ascended the Taedong River to lay siege to Pyongyang in the seventh lunar month of 661. Meanwhile, a second Tang column advanced overland from the Liao River. Led by Qibi Heli, who was both a Tang general and a Tiele chieftain, it penetrated as far as the Yalu, where it defeated a Koguryo army in the ninth lunar month. Su Dingfang's siege of Pyongyang continued until the spring of 662, when the defeat of a subsidiary Tang force prompted him to raise the siege and withdraw from enemy territory.[92]

While Su's army was struggling to subdue Koguryo, the Tang garrison units that had been left to hold Paekche also found themselves in a difficult situation. The people of the kingdom were not yet resigned to accepting Chinese rule, and there was a major rising against the occupiers in the winter of 660–1. Liu Renyuan, the principal Tang commander in Paekche, was besieged in the capital until one of his colleagues, Liu Rengui, organized a relief column composed of both Chinese garrison troops and contingents from Silla and stormed the stockades that the rebels had erected to control the mouth of the Kum River. The standoff that followed, with the Tang forces holding some walled towns and the Paekche rebels controlling many others, lasted from the spring of 661 to the autumn of 663. During this time both sides called for reinforcements. Liu Renyuan received more troops from Silla and some 7000 conscript-recruits mobilized in the coastal prefectures of Shandong, while the Paekche leaders sent a mission to the island power of Wa (as Japan was called at this time) to request military assistance. In the autumn of 663 the Tang and Silla forces launched a major campaign to capture Churyusong, the principal base of the Paekche leadership. While the main army, accompanied by the king of Silla, advanced overland, Liu Rengui brought the Tang fleet and supply ships to the mouth of the Kum River. There he encountered and destroyed the Japanese fleet in a series of naval actions, reportedly sinking no fewer than 400 of the enemy vessels. Churyusong was in Chinese hands by October 14, 663, the rebellion apparently crushed.[93]

In 666 Tang was again ready to focus its attention on Koguryo. By this time, the strategic situation was very different. Not only were Chinese (and Sillan) forces in a position to threaten Koguryo from both north and south, but the iron-handed dictator Yon Kae-so-mun had died at the beginning of the summer. His sons immediately fell to feuding

among themselves, creating an ideal situation for Tang strategists to exploit. Chinese forces began to attack the Liao frontier in the summer and autumn of 666, but the major effort was launched early in 667 with the aged Li Shiji as commander-in-chief of the Liaodong expeditionary army. Li's first objective, the fortress of Sinsong, was handed over by its demoralized defenders on October 6, and this success was followed by the prompt submission of sixteen other walled towns. These gains, together with assistance from one of the contending Koguryo factions, must have made it possible for Li to feed and shelter a large army on the east side of the Liao River through the winter, a feat that had eluded earlier Chinese expeditions against Koguryo. Li's advanced position in southeastern Manchuria then enabled him to press forward into the heartland of Koguryo in the spring of 668. The important fortress of Puyosong was taken in the second lunar month, and many other walled towns submitted without resistance. Pyongyang itself fell to Li Shiji on October 22 after a siege of little more than one month, betrayed by a fifth column among the defenders. Koguryo now shared the fate of Paekche as it was divided into a number of area commands and annexed to the Tang empire.[94]

The primary reason for the Tang triumph of 668, coming after a long series of failures dating back to 599, was the violent dissension within Koguryo in the wake of Yon Kae-so-mun's death. Not only was China now able to find many willing collaborators within a divided Koguryo, but a pervasive demoralization seems to have taken hold among the once-stalwart defenders of the walled towns. Another important factor contributing to the Tang success was that from the late 650s onward it became possible to apply pressure to Koguryo not only from the sea and the Liao River frontier, the traditional lines of advance, but also along the kingdom's southern land border in the Korean peninsula. This was partly a consequence of Tang's widening the conflict to include the subjugation of Paekche, but even more important was the alliance with Silla. The military cooperation of the southeastern kingdom preceded the conquest of Paekche and helped to make it possible by providing both a nearby supply base and a significant infusion of manpower. Had it not been for support from Silla, it seems likely that the Tang garrison forces would have been swept away in the great uprising of 661. Silla's armies also applied pressure on Koguryo directly and played a major role in provisioning the Chinese forces that besieged Pyongyang in 661–2.[95]

With regard to the longer term, however, China and Silla were working at cross purposes. As the events of the 660s made abundantly clear, the Tang goal was to turn the Korean peninsula into an integral part of the empire – though the king of Silla would apparently be allowed to enjoy a local autonomy similar to that granted to other

vassal chieftains who had accepted Tang official titles. Silla, on the other hand, harbored the ambition of unifying the entire peninsula under its own rule. In the end, it was Silla that emerged victorious.

Already in 669 there was unrest and rebellion in the newly-conquered territory of Koguryo. Tang efforts to remove tens of thousands of people to exile in China only exacerbated the situation.[96] In the early 670s the Tang general Gao Kan inflicted repeated defeats on the resisters, whose leaders simply took refuge in Silla and returned to fight another day. Before the end of 672 troops from Silla had taken the field in open support of the Koguryo rebels, and by the beginning of 674 Silla had managed to occupy all of the territory that had once belonged to the kingdom of Paekche.[97] In 674 and 675 Tang forces under Liu Rengui attacked Silla itself. Chinese histories record that Liu was victorious and forced the king of Silla to sue for peace, while Korean historians report the defeat of the Chinese armies.[98] The fact that the Tang government found it necessary to withdraw the headquarters of its Korean protectorate to the Liao River valley in the early months of 676 suggests that the Korean version is probably closer to the truth.[99] Silla was left in uncontested control of almost the whole of the Korean peninsula, and there was no great Tang campaign to recover what had been won with such difficulty and so quickly lost.

China's decision to write off the Korean venture was surely influenced by the appearance of serious threats in other quarters. In 670 a large Chinese army was severely defeated by the Tibetans along the Dafei River in what is now Qinghai province, and in 679 the Eastern Turks revolted against Chinese suzerainty and began to rebuild their old empire on the Mongolian steppe. These developments required the Tang empire to assume an unaccustomed defensive posture, and set in motion major changes in its military institutions and imperial strategy.

Notes

1 The 609 population is reported in *Sui shu*, ch. 29, p. 808; note that a commandery-by-commandery count of household figures in the same work yields 9,075,791 (p. 831, n. 4). For the early Tang figures, see E. G. Pulleyblank, "Registration of Population in China in the Sui and T'ang Periods," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 4 (1961), pp. 290, 293.

2 Wu Jing, *Zhenguan zhengyao* (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 1978), p. 70. For other contemporary testimony in the same vein, see Wu Feng, *Sui Tang Wudai shi* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1958), pp. 59–60. Banditry is mentioned in Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 192, p. 6025.

3 Pulleyblank, "Registration of Population in China in the Sui and T'ang Periods," pp. 292–5.

4 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 38, p. 1384. For the Tang treatment of local leaders, see Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 188, p. 5890, and Wechsler, *Mirror to the Son of Heaven*, p. 32.

5 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 191, p. 6004.

6 Robert M. Somers, "Time, Space, and Structure in the Consolidation of the T'ang Dynasty (AD 617–700)," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 45.5 (1986), pp. 971–94.

7 See Zhang's biography in *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 83, p. 2786, and his epitaph in Mao Han-kuang, *Tangdai muzhiming huibian fukao*, vol. 4, p. 141.

8 *Cefu yuangui*, ch. 388, p. 11a.

9 For Li Shiji's biographies, see *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 67, p. 2483, and *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 93, p. 3817; his origins are discussed in Huang Huixian, "Sui mo nongmin qiyi wuzhuang qianxi," pp. 186–7. For his illiteracy, see *Cefu yuangui*, ch. 320, p. 11a; and Li Fang, *Taiping guangji*, ch, 176, p. 1309.

10 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 192, p. 6033.

11 For indications of the new personnel situation, see *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 2, p. 35; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 192, pp. 6043, 6044, 6054–5, and ch. 193, pp. 6058, 6061.

12 Paul Demiéville's "Le Bouddhisme et la guerre," in idem, *Choix d'études bouddhiques (1929–1970)* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), pp. 261–99, explores the rationalizations that Buddhists found for fighting, and mentions the rebel-monks (pp. 274–5) and military activities of the clergy (pp. 276–7).

13 Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, pp. 12–13.

14 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 184, p. 5749.

15 Andrew Eisenberg, "Warfare and Political Stability in Medieval North Asian Regimes," *T'oung Pao*, 83 (1997), pp. 320–1.

16 See Graff, "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition," pp. 451–4.

17 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 2, pp. 30–1; Song Minqiu, *Tang da zhao ling ji* (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1959), ch. 107, p. 552; Sima Guan, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 192, pp. 6026–7.

18 Eisenberg, "Warfare and Political Stability in Medieval North Asian Regimes," pp. 323–4.

19 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 192, p. 6037. Two other passages (*Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 194A, p. 5158, and *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 192, pp. 6045–6) seem to place the outbreak of rebellion before the snowstorms.

20 Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier*, p. 143; also see p. 133.

21 See Michael R. Drompp, "Supernumerary Sovereigns: Superfluity and Mutability in the Elite Power Structure of the Early Türks," in Gary Seaman and Daniel Marks (eds.), *Rulers from the Steppe: State Formation on the Eurasian Periphery* (Los Angeles: Ethnographics Press, 1991), pp. 92–115.

22 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 192, p. 6049; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 194A, p. 5158.

23 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 193, pp. 6065–6.

24 For these arrangements, see *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 194A, p. 5159, and Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 193, p. 6066.

25 For detailed reconstruction of these events and a discussion of the sources, see Graff, "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition," pp. 489–92.

26 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 193, p. 6072.

27 The sources disagree as to which general first came up with the plan; see *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 67, pp. 2479 and 2485, and my attempt to reconcile these divergent accounts in "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition," pp. 494–7.

28 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 193, pp. 6072–3.

29 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 67, pp. 2485–6.

30 See Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 193, p. 6078; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 67, p. 2480; and *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 93, p. 3814.

31 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 193, p. 6074.

32 See Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 193, pp. 6075–7; the debate is summarized in Pan Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan* (Bellingham, Wash.: Western Washington University, 1997), pp. 183–7.

33 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 194A, p. 5163.

34 See Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963).

35 For the use of Turk and other nomad auxiliaries by the Tang, see Kang Le, *Tangdai qianqi*

de bianfang (Taipei: National Taiwan University, 1979), pp. 38, 47, 52.

36 The charge into Xieli's camp at Iron Mountain was led by Su Dingfang, commander of a regiment based in Chang'an; see *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 111, p. 4137.

37 The following description of the early Tang *fubing* system is based mainly on *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 50, pp. 1324–6, translated with copious annotation by Robert des Rotours in *Traité des fonctionnaires et Traité de l'armée* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1947), and on the classic studies of Hamaguchi Shigekuni, "Fuhei seido yori shin heisei e," *Shigaku zasshi*, 41 (1930), pp. 1255–95, 1439–1507, and Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*. The most thorough treatment in English is the first chapter of Swee Fo Lai, "The Military and Defense System under the T'ang Dynasty" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1986).

38 Zhang Guogang, *Tangdai zhengzhi zhidu yanjiu lunji* (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1994), pp. 23–4.

39 Hamaguchi, "Fuhei seido yori shin heisei e," p. 1462.

40 Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, pp. 167–8, 188–9, 217–18.

41 Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, pp. 215–16.

42 Lai, "The Military and Defense System under the T'ang Dynasty," pp. 1, 54–5.

43 *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 50, pp. 1325–6; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 43, p. 1834.

44 Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, p. 175.

45 Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, pp. 148–50.

46 Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, pp. 155–7; also see Hamaguchi, "Fuhei seido yori shin heisei e," pp. 1265, 1440–1, and *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 37, p. 961.

47 Kikuchi Hideo, "To setsushofu no bunpu mondai ni kansuru ichi kaishaku," *Toyoshi kenkyuo*, 27 (1968), p. 128.

48 Zhang Guogang, *Tangdai zhengzhi zhidu yanjiu lunji*, p. 23–4.

49 Cen Zhongmian, *Fubing zhidu yanjiu* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1957), p. 59.

50 Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 75–80.

51 Kikuchi, "To setsushofu no bunpu mondai," pp. 135–6.

52 *Tang lü shu yi* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1933), Section 3, ch. 16, p. 25. Mobilization procedures and safeguards are discussed in Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, pp. 163–4, and Hamaguchi, "Fuhei seido yori shin heisei e," pp. 1282–3.

53 *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 50, p. 1328.

54 Sun Jimin discusses the difference between the two types of expeditionary army commander in his *Tangdai xingjun zhidu yanjiu*, pp. 141–7.

55 For more information on the *bingmu*, see Kikuchi Hideo, "Todai heibo no seikaku to meisho to ni tsuite," *Shien*, 68 (May 1956), pp. 75–98; Tang Geng'ou, "Tangdai qianqi de bingmu," *Lishi yanjiu*, 1981, No. 4, pp. 159–72; and Zhang Guogang, *Tangdai zhengzhi zhidu yanjiu*, pp. 29–53.

56 Sun Jimin, *Tangdai xingjun zhidu yanjiu*, pp. 114, 115; Zhang Guogang, *Tangdai zhengzhi zhidu yanjiu lunji*, pp. 97–8, 100–1; Zhang Qun, *Tangdai fanjiang yanjiu* (Taipei: Lianjing, 1986), p. 96.

57 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 199, pp. 6274–5.

58 The fragments of Li Jing's work have been conveniently gathered in a modern annotated edition; see Deng Zezong, *Li Jing bingfa jiben zhuyi* (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1990).

59 Du You, *Tong dian*, ch. 148, pp. 3792–3; ch. 149, p. 3813.

60 *Tong dian*, ch. 148, p. 3794.

61 Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, p. 166; Lai, "The Military and Defense System under the T'ang Dynasty," p. 32.

62 *Tong dian*, ch. 148, p. 3794; ch. 149, p. 3812; ch. 157, pp. 4026 and 4035.

63 *Tong dian*, ch. 149, pp. 3813–14; ch. 157, p. 4033.

64 *Tong dian*, ch. 149, p. 3812; ch. 157, p. 4026. Gu Jiguang has suggested that the *tong*, not the *dui*, was the most important level of combat organization in early Tang armies; see his *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, p. 166.

65 *Tong dian*, ch. 157, p. 4033.

66 *Tong dian*, ch. 148, p. 3789.

67 *Tong dian*, ch. 149, p. 3813.

68 *Tong dian*, ch. 149, pp. 3812, 3814.

69 *Tong dian*, ch. 149, p. 3824.

70 *Tong dian*, ch. 149, p. 3813; also see Deng Zezong, *Li Jing bingfa jiben zhuyi*, pp. 64, 74.

71 *Tong dian*, ch. 157, p. 4029.

72 George T. Dennis (trans.), *Maurice's Strategikon: Handbook of Byzantine Military Strategy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), pp. xvi–xvii.

73 *Maurice's Strategikon*, pp. 19–20.

74 *Maurice's Strategikon*, p. 65.

75 *Maurice's Strategikon*, pp. 23, 80, 83, 87–8. This difference in attitude may have been due

to the more finite resources of the Eastern Roman empire and its unenviable strategic position; see Walter Emil Kaegi, Jr., *Some Thoughts on Byzantine Military Strategy* (Brookline, Mass.: Hellenic College Press, 1983), p. 5 and passim.

76 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 194, pp. 6110–13; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 67, p. 2481.

77 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 196, pp. 6170–2.

78 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 199, pp. 6262–4.

79 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 200, pp. 6306–7.

80 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 196, pp. 6169–70; Howard J. Wechsler, "T'ai-tsung (reign 626–49) the Consolidator," in Denis Twitchett (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 3: *Sui and T'ang China, 589–906, Pt. 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 233–4.

81 For these preparations, see Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 197, p. 6214, and *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 199A, pp. 5322–3.

82 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 199A, p. 5321.

83 These events are described in Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 197, pp. 6218–21, and ch. 198, pp. 6222–3; and in *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 199A, pp. 5323–4.

84 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 198, pp. 6224–6; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 199A, p. 5324.

85 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 198, pp. 6228–9; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 199A, pp. 5325–6.

86 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 197, p. 6220; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 199A, p. 5325.

87 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 198, p. 6230; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 199A, pp. 5325–6.

88 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 198, pp. 6245–8.

89 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 199A, p. 5326.

90 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 200, p. 6320; *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 220, p. 6195.

91 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 200, p. 6321.

92 *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 220, pp. 6195–6; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 200, pp. 6323–6.

93 For these events, see *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 220, pp. 6200–1; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 199A, pp. 5331–3; and Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 200, pp. 6323–4, 6329–30, and ch. 201, pp. 6336–8.

94 *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 220, pp. 6196–7; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 201, pp. 6352–7.

95 John Charles Jamieson, "The Samguk Sagi and the Unification Wars" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1969), pp. 95–6, 115–16.

96 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 201, p. 6359; *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 220, p. 6197.

97 *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 220, p. 6198; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 201, p. 6364, and ch. 202, pp. 6367, 6370, and 6372.

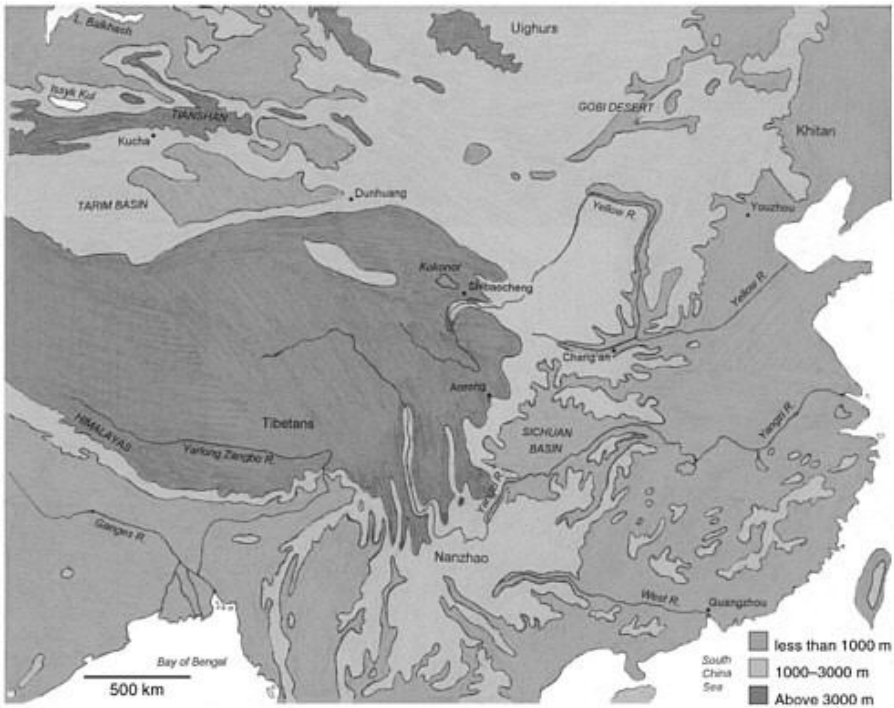
98 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 202, pp. 6372, 6375; Jamieson, "The Samguk Sagi and the Unification Wars," pp. 68–70, 74, 158, and 162.

99 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 202, p. 6378.

CHAPTER TEN
The price of professionalism

In 664 Liu Rengui, commander of the Tang garrison in recently subjugated Paekche, sent a memorial to the emperor reporting that the morale of his conscript-recruits was extremely low. The most immediate problem was that the troops, now in their second year in Korea, had brought only enough clothing to last them a single year. (Evidently, a much shorter sojourn overseas had been expected.) But the soldiers' discontent extended far beyond the matter of insufficient clothing. The rewards they received for their service were much less generous than had been customary in the past, and men who had earned honorific ranks (*xun guan*) in earlier campaigns had been sent back into the field and "exposed to hardship with no distinction between themselves and ordinary commoners." Where men had once been quick to volunteer for military expeditions, the repeated dispatch of conscript-recruits to the Korean peninsula – and the fact that their merit was not properly rewarded – had created an aversion to military service. Strong young men from prosperous families used their influence to avoid conscription, while those who had no money and did not frequent local government offices, even if old and weak, were still hauled in for service. Some of them deserted or inflicted disabling injuries upon themselves in order to avoid taking ship for Korea.[1]

Liu's memorial was an early harbinger of the collapse of the system of ad hoc expeditionary armies that had worked so well in the days of Tang Taizong. Temporary armies composed of short-term conscripts and the farmer-soldiers of the *fubing* regiments were well suited for swift, aggressive campaigns of limited duration concluding with a convincing victory over the enemy. Li Jing's conquest of the Eastern Turks in 629–30 was the model of such a campaign. After the middle of the seventh century, however, the Tang empire became increasingly involved in conflicts with distant, well-organized, and militarily powerful states that were simply not susceptible to a single knockout blow. Koguryo was one such opponent, and Silla another. In the west, Tang China was confronted with the rapidly rising power of the Tibetan empire founded by Srong-btsan-sgam-po. In the early 660s, while Tang armies were occupied in the Korean peninsula, the Tibetans conquered the Tuyuhun territories in what is now Qinghai province. In 665 they began to challenge



Map 16 Tang China and Inner Asia, *ca.* AD 750

Tang control of the oasis kingdoms of the Tarim Basin, and in the spring and summer of 670 they captured the key administrative center of Kucha and evicted Tang forces from almost all of the vast desert region between the Tianshan Mountains and the northern edge of the Tibetan plateau. In the eighth lunar month of 670, a large Tang army under Xue Rengui struck southward into the Tuyuhun country. Xue separated his best and most mobile troops from the baggage train and slower-moving elements and advanced toward the great lake of Kokonor, giving the Tibetans the opportunity to overrun the baggage train and then crush Xue's own light column at the battle of the Dafei River.[2] In 678 another Tang army campaigning in the Qinghai region was similarly exposed to defeat in detail at the hands of the Tibetans, and in 680 Tibetan forces captured the important fortress of Anrong in the mountainous borderland of northwestern Sichuan.[3] In all of these campaigns, Tang troops found themselves fighting in remote, sparsely populated, and inhospitable terrain that was the natural element of their Tibetan opponents. The heartland of the Tibetan state in the valley of the Yarlung Zangbo (Brahmaputra) River, meanwhile, was sheltered by so many geographical barriers as to be entirely immune to Chinese attack.

The military situation in the northwest deteriorated even further in

679 when the Eastern Turks, Tang vassals since 630, rebelled on the northern border of Hedong (modern Shanxi). Their initial rising was suppressed by Tang forces in 681, but at the end of the following year the revolt was renewed with greater success by Qutlugh Qaghan, a descendant of Xieli. The revived Eastern Turk qaghanate would dominate the Mongolian steppes for more than fifty years. The appearance of this hostile power to the north required the diversion of Tang forces that might otherwise have been directed against the Tibetans in the west, and the defection of the Eastern Turks also blunted the offensive power of Tang expeditionary armies that had formerly benefited from the speed, mobility, and martial prowess of their nomad auxiliaries.

The shift in the military balance between Tang China and its northern and western neighbors spelled the end of the expeditionary army system. The expeditionary armies were no longer able to inflict decisive defeats on their enemies and return home again within a reasonable period of time. Incapable of delivering a knockout blow, yet at the same time unable to withdraw when undefeated enemy forces were still in a position to threaten exposed border prefectures, more and more expeditionary armies found it necessary to settle down in static encampments which gradually evolved into permanent garrisons. In the year 677, for example, several static "army garrisons" (*jun zhen*) were established on the Tibetan frontier. The armies' change of posture was signalled by the title of "garrison defense commander-in-chief for the expeditionary army of the Taohe route" that Liu Rengui received when he was sent to take command of the northwestern frontier forces facing the Tibetans.[4] Initially set in motion by the Tibetan challenge, the establishment of a system of permanent frontier armies was nevertheless a gradual, start-and-stop process that was not completed until well into the eighth century. An army might garrison one location for a few years, then be reactivated as an expeditionary army, move to another location, and settle down there.[5] The last record of a specially constituted expeditionary army being sent into the field comes from 732, long after the older expeditionary forces had been converted into permanent garrisons.[6]

At first, no provision was made for the replacement or relief of the *fubing* and conscript-recruits who made up these campaign armies turned into garrisons. Men originally enlisted for the duration of what was expected to be a short campaign were kept away from home for years on end.[7] This must have had much the same depressing effect on morale that Liu Rengui observed in Korea in the early 660s, dampening the enthusiasm of both elite and commoners for military service. Within a few years of the military setbacks of the 670s, rotational systems were set up to cycle replacements – both *fubing* and

conscript-recruits – in and out of the army garrisons on a regular basis.[8] The typical period of frontier duty was two or three years.[9] It is probably not coincidental that the period between 685 and 688 saw a major increase in the numerical strength of the *fubing*, with regimental quotas raised from 600 to 800 men for the smallest regiments and from 1000 to 1200 for the largest. The need to maintain strong, permanent forces on the frontier could not be met by the existing *fubing* establishment without disrupting the schedule of rotation for guard duty in the capital or keeping soldiers away from their homes for very extended periods. In addition to beefing up the existing *fubing* units, the Tang government also created a considerable number of new regiments in areas close to the northern border.[10] This had the advantage of minimizing the logistical costs associated with the movement of tens of thousands of troops to and from the border each year, and the new regiments appear to have been excused from rotational guard duty in the capital in return for their contribution to frontier defense.

In spite of all the measures to increase overall manpower and activate new regiments in frontier regions, there is ample evidence that the *fubing* system was in distress by the last years of the seventh century. In 695, for example, it was reported that many *fubing* in the Guanzhong region around Chang'an were absconding from their homes in order to escape the military service obligation, and in the following year the government found it necessary to raise an entirely new militia force to help resist an invasion of the Hebei region by the nomadic Khitan people of the northeast.[11] In addition to the new burden placed upon the *fubing* by the demands of frontier defense, the deterioration of the "equal-field" system of land redistribution also had a negative impact on the old regimental system. The entire structure was predicated on the assumption that the soldiers were small farmers who would not only be able to support themselves when they were not on active duty, but would even be able to provide some of their own equipment and supplies. The equal-field system was, *in theory*, supposed to provide each adult male with 100 *mu* of land, more than enough to support an average family.[12] Real land allotments, however, did not always conform to the standards stipulated in the land regulations. This was especially true in crowded regions such as Guanzhong, where so many of the regiments were concentrated. The problem only intensified as time passed. With wealthy and powerful families augmenting their landholdings by a variety of devices both legal and illegal, less and less land was available for distribution to ordinary farmers. The problem was already acute by the last years of the seventh century, and helps to explain why many of the *fubing* of the Guanzhong region were abandoning both their home districts and

their military obligations.[13] The decline of the *fubing* was a gradual process that extended over several decades, but it is generally agreed that the system was completely moribund by 749 – the year in which the dispatch of fish-shaped copper tallies (or mobilization tokens) to the various regiments was halted on the grounds that there were no longer any troops available for service.[14]

In the early years of the eighth century, conscript-recruits serving limited tours of duty on the frontier were the single most important source of manpower for the army garrisons. However, the conscript-recruit system was not ideally suited to sustaining the frontier defenses. There were substantial costs associated with the constant movement of large bodies of men between the interior and the borders, and the limited tour of duty also meant that the most experienced troops were constantly being replaced by raw recruits.[15] Longer tours and more conscription from districts closer to the frontier did not solve the basic problem. In 717 the government sought to persuade conscript-recruits to remain with the armies past the expiration of their term of service by offering them material inducements.[16] With the breakdown of the equal-field system, the concentration of landownership in the hands of wealthy families, and the rise of vagrancy – all trends that were very much in evidence during the first half of the eighth century – there was no shortage of hard-pressed peasants who might be expected to respond to such offers.[17] Men who chose to remain on the frontier became known as "sturdy lads" (*jian'er*), a label that had originally been applied to elite elements among the conscript-recruits.[18] The year 737 saw a decisive shift toward voluntary recruitment of an *armée de métier* dedicated to long-term service on the frontiers. An imperial edict issued on June 12 of that year called upon frontier commanders to calculate their manpower needs and establish quotas to be filled by the recruitment of currently serving conscript-recruits and members of migrant familes to serve as long-term *jian'er*. As inducements, the government offered material compensation "above the usual standard," permanent exemption from taxes and corvée, and provision of farmland and dwellings for dependants who accompanied soldiers to the frontier.[19] The offer was apparently a great success. In the first month of 738, with the quotas already close to being filled, it was decreed that the remaining conscripts still serving on the frontier would be allowed to return home, and that henceforth no more men were to be conscripted for service in the army garrisons.[20]

By the middle of the eighth century, the *jian'er* were the most common and characteristic element of the frontier armies. But they were not the only element present. Peasant conscripts continued to appear even after 738, since the armies were not always able to fill their quotas

entirely with volunteers. Moreover, the new *armée de métier* proved inadequate whenever it became necessary to raise large forces in a short period of time in order to field an unusually large campaign army or cope with a sudden emergency. The disastrous campaign against the southwestern kingdom of Nanzhao in 754 cost the lives of tens of thousands of hapless peasant conscripts, and when the great rebellion of An Lushan erupted at the end of 755 conscript-recruits were rushed to the defense of the capital.[21] Non-Chinese contingents continued to play a prominent role in the new frontier armies, and especially in their all-important cavalry forces. The losses caused by the defection of the Eastern Turks in 679 were made good in the early years of the eighth century as political instability and armed conflict on the steppe drove many tribal leaders to submit to Tang authority. As in the days of the expeditionary army system in the seventh century, non-Chinese units were a discrete element within the Tang military structure, but they tended to enjoy less autonomy than in the past and were bound more closely into the larger organizational framework. Their status was less that of the ally and more that of the subordinate.[22] By the middle of the eighth century, the frontier armies and garrisons were polyglot communities composed of Chinese and steppe elements.

A list of the Tang frontier forces believed to date from 742 shows an arc of more than sixty army garrisons stretching from the Liao River valley in the northeast to Sichuan in the southwest.[23] In addition, there were several other garrisons located in what is now northern Vietnam, on the southeast coast, and on the Shandong peninsula. These units varied in size from a few hundred men to upwards of 30,000, with the great majority falling within the range of one thousand to ten thousand. The total number of soldiers was almost half a million, of whom no more than 80,000 appear to have been cavalry. Most of the units listed are designated as "armies" (*jun*); some are identified as "defense detachments" (*shouzhuo*) or "fortresses" (*cheng*). The defense detachments are usually – but not invariably – smaller than the armies. The status of these units was rather fluid; *shouzhuo* could be converted to armies, and armies reduced to *shouzhuo*.[24]

As of 742, all but a handful of the army garrisons had been organized into ten regional military commands, each responsible for the security of a large sector of the frontier. In most cases, these sectors corresponded to the frontier prefectures of one of the province-sized "circuits of inspection" (*dao*) that had been delineated in 733. The five largest commands each disposed of between 55,000 and 91,000 men, and covered the northern frontier from the area of modern Beijing to the Gansu corridor. Smaller regional commands projected bastion-like

from the main line to hold the Liao River valley in the northeast and the Tarim basin and the Tianshan range in the northwest, and there were also separate and relatively small regional commands for the Sichuan frontier and the far south. A large northern command typically controlled about a dozen armies and defense detachments, with the bulk of these units positioned to guard prefectural seats and other key points along the frontier. In most regional commands, one army considerably larger than the others was based at the headquarters of the region's military commander and subject to his direct control. This army might account for as much as 45 percent of the region's total troop strength, including the lion's share of the cavalry. In some cases cavalry accounted for more than half of the headquarters army. Most army garrisons, in contrast, consisted of no more than 10 percent cavalry – if mounted troops were present at all. Most of the smaller frontier armies appear to have been best suited for the static defense of fortified positions. The large headquarters armies, meanwhile, provided each region with a relatively mobile strike force and strategic reserve. It could be moved rapidly to the support of threatened sectors and was large enough to undertake major campaigns and punitive expeditions beyond the frontier. The strategic functions that had once been performed by ad hoc expeditionary armies sent from the interior of the empire were now the responsibility of strong armies permanently stationed along the periphery.

Of the ten regional commands that existed in 742, nine were headed by "military governors" (*jiedushi*). These were extraordinary imperial commissionerships rather than regular bureaucratic offices. The title probably derives from the expression *jiedu*, meaning "to regulate with the insignia of command," that was used in early Tang to indicate the authority the commander-in-chief of an expeditionary army wielded over his subordinate commanders.[25] This etymology dovetails with the origin of the frontier forces in expeditionary armies compelled by circumstances to settle down as permanent garrisons. The post of military governor – and the regional commands themselves – would seem to have emerged gradually as an improvised response to the need for some sort of superior command authority to coordinate the operations of a number of army garrisons stationed in a particular geographical area and confronting the same opponent. After several decades of terminological chaos, the title of *jiedushi* had become the standard and almost universal appellation for the regional military commanders by the early 730s.

The substance of the position continued to evolve over time, however, with ever greater powers accruing to the incumbents. By 750, almost all of the military governors held commissionerships for public

revenues and state lands concurrently with their *jiedushi* appointments. These posts were directly involved with the supply and support of the frontier armies, but at the same time they gave the military governor fiscal and economic authority that was province-wide rather than confined to a handful of frontier prefectures. Some military governors also held the office of investigating commissioner (*caifangshi*), which gave them extensive authority over the civil affairs of every prefecture in the circuit.[26] The office of the *jiedushi* was beginning to take on the character of a true provincial governorship. This was a development that the Tang state had taken pains to avoid in earlier times for fear that strong regional regimes might emerge to challenge the authority of the court. During the reign of Xuanzong (712–56), however, considerations of military efficiency and effectiveness tended to trump other arguments.

From the time of their inception, the military governorships had normally been entrusted to high-ranking Han Chinese officials who had already held some of the empire's top civil positions. These early *jiedushi* included members of powerful and prominent families with long traditions of officeholding, as well as relative parvenus who had entered government service by the increasingly prestigious route of the literary examinations. Among the latter sort was the noted statesman and poet Zhang Yue, who held several northern frontier commands in the years around 720.[27] Such men might return to court with enhanced prestige to serve the emperor as chief ministers. This pattern was altered in 747 when the then-dominant chief minister, Li Linfu, initiated a new policy of appointing non-Chinese officers to the key frontier commands on the grounds that they were more courageous and effective in combat. It has long been claimed that Li's real motive was to prevent members of the Chinese political elite from using military success on the frontier as a means of accumulating the political capital to challenge his own hold on the government.[28] This may well be true, but the rationale that he offered should not be dismissed out of hand. It must have sounded quite sensible to many of Li's contemporaries – including the emperor himself, who was notoriously hungry for military glory and always welcomed reports of victories over foreign enemies.[29]

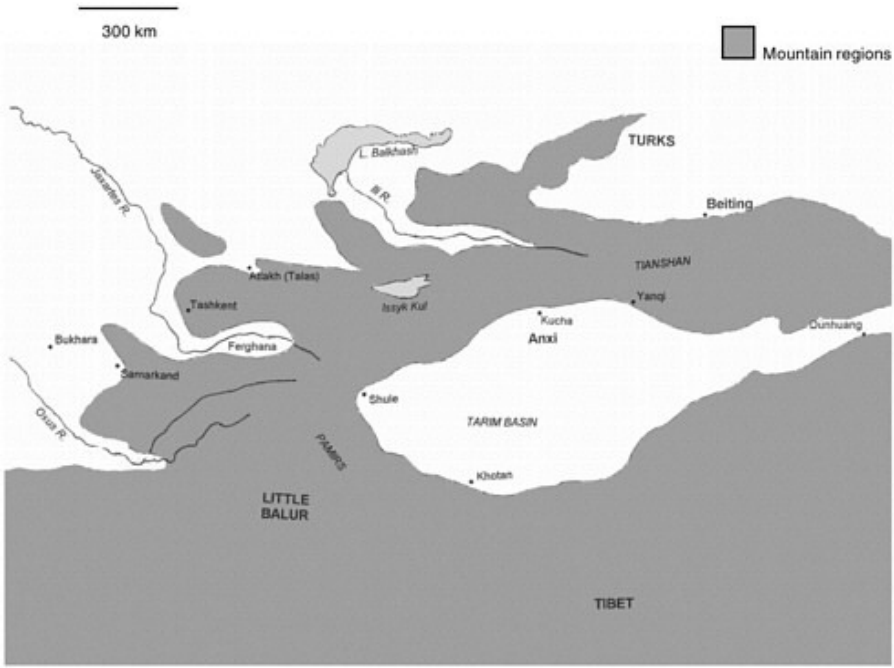
The principal beneficiaries of the new personnel policy were Geshu Han and An Lushan. Both men were of foreign origin and mixed blood. Geshu's father was a Turk descended from the ruling subtribe of the Turgesh people, while his mother was a princess from the small Central Asian principality of Khotan. The father had served Tang as a frontier official, and Geshu followed a similar path. He became an officer of the Hexi and Longyou armies, sometimes fighting in the front ranks against the Tibetans. In 747 he was appointed military

governor of Longyou, and from 753 he served concurrently as the military governor of neighboring Hexi. Geshu was not a simple "barbarian" soldier; his family had both money and a tradition of officeholding, and Geshu himself had enough education to be able to read classic texts such as the *Tradition of Zuo* (*Zuo zhuan*) and Ban Gu's *History of the Han Dynasty* (*Han shu*).[30] An Lushan came from a similar background, but was a more uncouth character. The son of a Turkish mother, he belonged to a Sogdian (Central Asian) family associated with the rulers of the second Eastern Turk qaghanate. In 716 a bloody coup at the Turkish court drove the An family to seek refuge in the Tang empire. An Lushan was only one of several relatives who eventually rose to high rank after entering the Tang frontier armies. In contrast to Geshu Han, An was not literate in Chinese, but this does not seem to have impeded his promotion. By 733 An was an important deputy of the Youzhou military governor Zhang Shougui. In 742 he was made military governor of Pinglu in southwestern Manchuria. Two years later he was transferred to the much more powerful Youzhou command (now called Fanyang) while retaining overall control of Pinglu. And in 751 yet another regional command, that of Hedong in what is now Shanxi, was added to An's purview.[31] Other foreigners, most notably the Korean Gao Xianzhi and An's kinsman An Sishun, also held military governorships during this period, but An Lushan and Geshu Han were the only ones permitted to control multiple frontier commands concurrently.

The power of these men was further enhanced by changes that were taking place at lower command levels. The shift from rotational duty to the stationing of a permanent, long-service soldiery along the northern frontier saw the emergence of a new sort of officer corps. Where the leadership of the *fubing* had been drawn largely from locally powerful and prominent families rooted in their home communities, the trend in the new frontier armies was to promote men from the ranks of the generally plebeian *jian'er* to serve as subalterns and middle-grade officers. It is possible that the allure of the civil bureaucracy, especially after the system of literary examinations became an important means of fast-track recruitment during the ascendancy of Empress Wu Zetian in the latter part of the seventh century, also brought a reduction in the number of young men of good family who chose to pursue military careers. In 702 Empress Wu introduced a new system of regular annual military qualification examinations (*wuju*) in order to attract a better class of military officer. Examinees were scored on their skill with bow and arrow and the cavalry lance, and were also tested for physical strength and command "presence." Those who passed with relatively high scores might be appointed to posts in the imperial guards.[32] In fact, the

military examinations had no discernable influence on the composition of the Tang officer corps.[33] By the middle of the eighth century, it seems that the great majority of frontier officers at all levels were either Han Chinese from very humble backgrounds or non-Han, usually of steppe origin. Such men were often promoted from the ranks on the basis of local military examinations administered at their garrison by the army commander or military governor.[34] The military governors gained considerable power over the selection and promotion of their own subordinates, and their personnel decisions were routinely approved by the central authorities in Chang'an. At the beginning of 755, for example, An Lushan was allowed to replace thirty-two of his Han commanders with men of barbarian origin.[35] In the frontier garrisons, the loyalty of the officers came to be directed more toward their military governors than the distant Tang court.

Though not invariably victorious, the new professional frontier armies that emerged during Xuanzong's reign were generally successful in covering the borders, establishing strong positions well to the north and west of the major areas of Chinese settlement and projecting power outward to keep inveterate foes such as the Tibetans and the nomadic Khitan people of the northeast off balance. There were no incursions into Chinese territory at all comparable to the devastating Khitan invasion of Hebei that occurred in 696 during the reign of Empress Wu. In the far northwest, imperial forces were eventually able to reestablish firm control over the Tarim basin and Dzungaria and extend Tang suzerainty to many of the small states of the Pamirs and Transoxiana. The Anrong fortress on the mountainous Sichuan frontier, held by the Tibetans for sixty years, was recaptured in 740. In 747 Gao Xianzhi, a general of Korean (Koguryo) descent attached to the Anxi military command in the Tarim basin, led an army of 10,000 men on an epic march southward across the Pamirs to conquer the strategically located Tibetan client kingdom of Little Balur (Gilgit), cutting Tibet's communications with the Arabs and the Western Turks.[36] The Longyou military governor Geshu Han took the stronghold of Shibaocheng east of Kokonor – albeit at enormous cost – in 749. Geshu went on to eject the Tibetans from the "Nine Bends" region on the upper course of the Yellow River in 753. In what is now Mongolia, the Eastern Turk qaghanate disintegrated in 741 as a result of internal strife and was soon replaced by the Uighurs, whose basic policy was not antagonistic to Tang, as the hegemon of the northern steppe. On the northeastern frontier, the military governors of Youzhou (Fanyang) and Pinglu experienced both victory and



Map 17 The Tarim basin and Transoxiana, *ca.* AD 750

defeat in their frequent encounters with the Khitan, but usually managed to retain the strategic initiative.[37]

When the Tang frontier armies suffered serious defeats, it was usually in the context of rash, ill-considered offensive operations. Later commentators attributed the sometimes foolhardy aggressiveness of the military governors to their desire to gain Xuanzong's favor by winning victories in the field.[38] The year 751 was especially ill-starred. In the late spring the Jiannan (Sichuan) military governor Xianyu Zhongtong led an army of 80,000 against the recently established kingdom of Nanzhao in what is now Yunnan province – and was utterly defeated with the loss of some three-quarters of his original force. The influential minister Yang Guozhong, Xianyu's patron at court and cousin of the emperor's favorite consort, somehow managed to conceal the defeat and was not deterred from making a second, equally disastrous attempt on Nanzhao in 754. During this second campaign the Nanzhao ruler avoided battle until the Tang army had eaten up its grain supplies and large numbers of men had been stricken with a "miasmal pestilence," then pursued and wiped out the intruders.[39] These defeats in the far southwest were not, strictly speaking, the fault of the new professional armies, since the huge forces fielded by the Sichuan commanders consisted largely of conscript-recruits – many of whom were drawn from North China and had no experience of or immunity to the microbes of the subtropical

south.

Two other setbacks in the late summer and early autumn of 751 did involve the professional armies of the northern frontier, however. Striking deep into Khitan territory along the Tuluzhen (Laoha) River, the Fanyang military governor An Lushan was routed with heavy losses when a tribal contingent accompanying his army went over to the Khitan side after the battle had been joined. An was not helped by the fact that the torrential rains through which he had forced his advance had weakened the glue and sinew of his soldiers' composite bows.[40] More than two thousand miles to the west and perhaps two months earlier, a Tang army of 30,000 under Gao Xianzhi, now military governor of Anxi, had confronted an Arab army near the town of Atlakh on the Talas River. Gao had intervened on the side of one of the local principalities, Ferghana, in its conflict with neighboring Tashkent. This move prompted Ziyad bin Salih, governor of Samarkand for the Ummayyad caliphate, to lead his Arab army north to the assistance of Tashkent. The outcome of the battle was decided in much the same way as An Lushan's encounter with the Khitan: Gao's army was routed and nearly destroyed when an allied contingent of Qarluq Turks defected to the Arabs.[41] This contest, the only major battle ever fought between Chinese and Arab armies, was entirely without sequel. The Tang empire was soon distracted by its own internal difficulties, and the Arabs made no attempt to press forward into the Tarim Basin and Dzungaria.

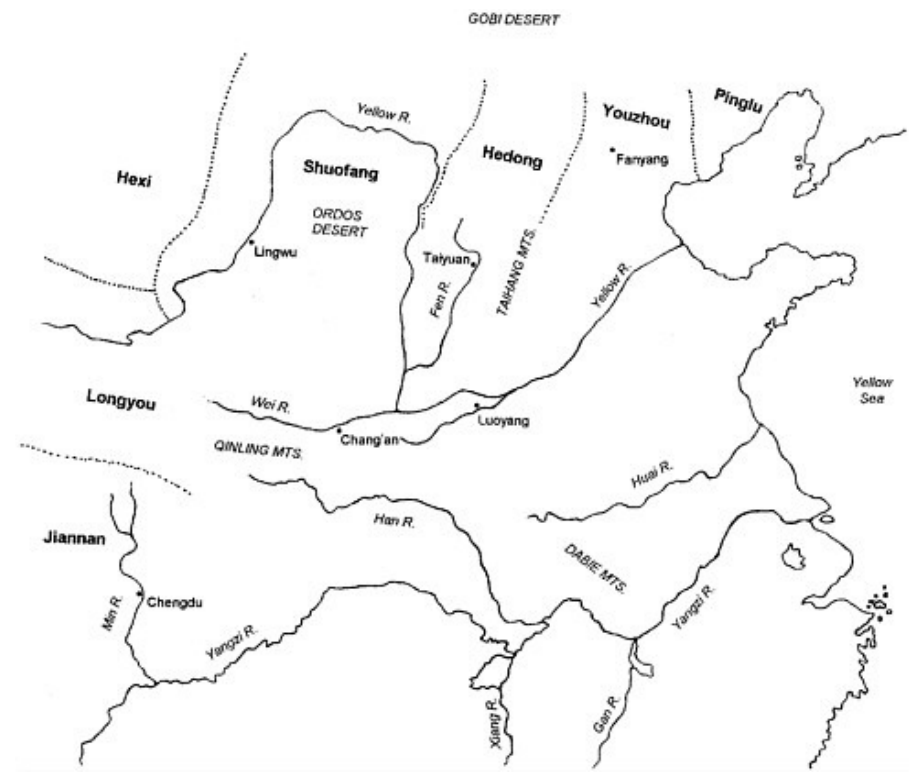
Even without the additional expenses resulting from ill-advised expeditions and the occasional military catastrophe, the cost of maintaining large, permanent armies on the frontier was still substantial. The empire's military establishment in the middle of the eighth century was no smaller than it had been in the heyday of the *fubing*, but a very high proportion of the men in the ranks were now costly long-service veterans rather than part-time farmer-soldiers who made few demands on the state's resources. The new professional fighters not only contributed no tax revenue to the state's coffers, but required payments of cloth and grain that must have been well in excess of the subsistence rations provided for short-term conscripts. The shift toward an *armée de métier* meant a considerable increase in military expenditure. It was reported that before 712 frontier defense had cost no more than two million strings of copper cash each year, as opposed to twelve million strings in 742 and fourteen or fifteen million by 755.[42] There is reason to question whether the Tang empire's defense budget really grew sevenfold between 712 and 755, since the increase may in part represent an accounting change as conscript-recruits supported from prefectural resources were replaced by *jian'er* maintained with funds dispatched from the center.[43] Given

the growing importance of material reward in attracting and retaining men for military service, however, there seems little reason to doubt that the trend of military expenditure was sharply upward. During the reign of Xuanzong, as both before and after, the cost of supporting the military was the single largest item of state expenditure.[44] In some regions, especially along the north-western frontier, the government attempted to save at least part of the cost of transporting grain over long distances by establishing large numbers of military agricultural colonies (*tuntian*) near the army garrisons.[45]

On the frontiers of the empire, the changes set in motion in the 670s had, by the middle of the eighth century, resulted in the formation of large standing armies composed of battle-hardened veterans. The new defense system was extremely powerful but also increasingly expensive, and it posed a potential threat to the supremacy of the Tang court. The government was not unaware of this danger, and several institutional mechanisms had long been in place to check the centrifugal tendencies of frontier commanders. The senior officers of army garrisons, like most other Tang officials, were supposed to be assigned to a single post for only a few years, after which time they were subject to reassignment.[46] Up until the 740s, the military governors themselves were normally replaced at frequent intervals. A second control mechanism was the assignment of censors – civil officials with an investigative function – to serve as "army supervisors" (*jianjun*). In the 730s, during Xuanzong's reign, the censors were replaced in this function by trusted eunuchs sent from the imperial palace. The supervisor, whether censor or eunuch, did not have the authority to issue orders to the general or military governor. His basic duties were to "oversee reward and punishment," uncover falsehoods, and report any illegal or treasonable activities to the emperor.[47] The efficacy of this system was somewhat reduced by the fact that army supervisors were appointed on a case-by-case basis. Gao Xianzhi was saddled with the eunuch supervisor Bian Lingcheng during his expedition to Little Balur in 747, but there is no evidence that the Fanyang military governor An Lushan, commander of much more powerful forces, ever had to put up with such an intrusive presence in *his* headquarters.[48] Old rules do not seem to have been enforced in the cases of favored commanders such as Geshu Han and An Lushan; by the autumn of 755, An was in his twelfth year as military governor of Fanyang.

By that time, there were no armed forces at the capital or elsewhere in the interior of the empire that were at all capable of counterbalancing the frontier armies. The old *fubing* system was completely moribund, and the palace armies in Chang'an were no more than a hollow shell. These forces were originally drawn from members of Li Yuan's original

army who had settled near the capital at the time the Tang dynasty was founded, but had undergone repeated reorganizations since that time and had seen very little combat. By the middle of the eighth century the total manpower quota for all four of the palace armies was perhaps 60,000 men. Only a fraction of this number were actually on duty at any given time, however, and the quality of the troops was open to question. Many were registered inhabitants of districts near the capital who were selected for service in much the same manner as the *fubing*, while others were relatives of officials, sons of wealthy families, and even merchants. Persons of these sorts found membership in the palace armies attractive because it offered immunity from taxes and government labor exactions – as well as from military service on

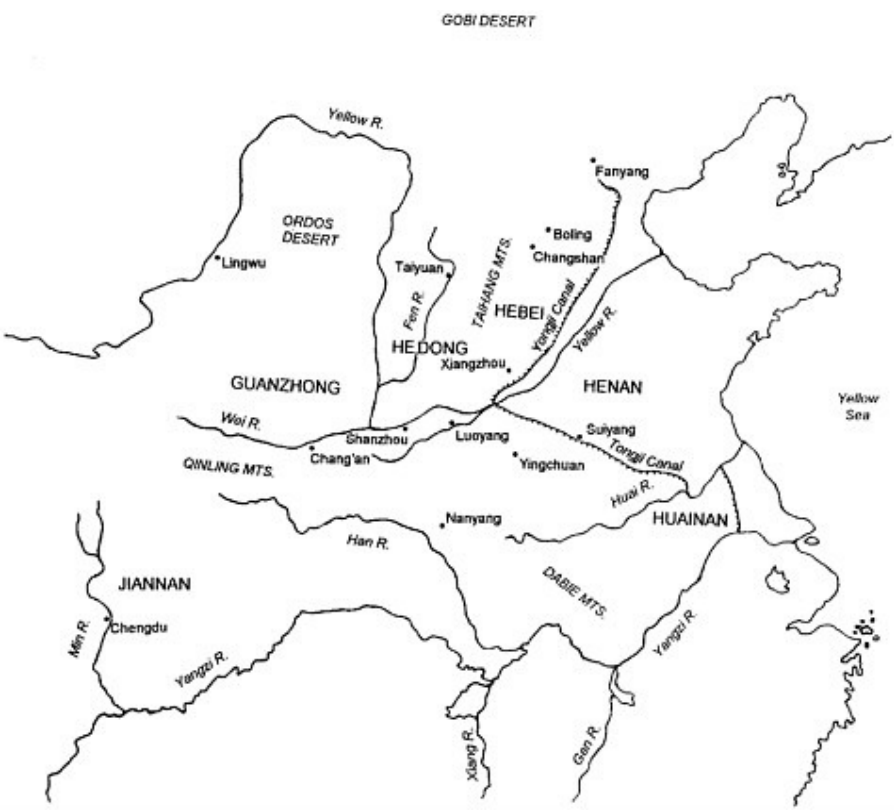


Map 18 Tang frontier commands in AD 755

the frontier. It does not seem that very much was demanded of them in return, nor that they constituted a disciplined, well-trained, and battle-ready force.[49]

The crisis came near the end of 755. An Lushan had enjoyed a good working relationship with Li Linfu, the dominant chief minister from

736 until his death in 752. Li did not consider the illiterate frontier general a threat to his position at court and allowed him to remain in office year after year, while An for his part seems to have stood in awe of Li. Matters were very different under Li's successor Yang Guozhong, a much less imposing figure who owed his power at court to the fact that he was a second cousin of Xuanzong's favorite consort. An still held the emperor's trust, but he quickly became involved in a power struggle with Yang Guozhong. After Yang began to arrest and eliminate his supporters in the capital, An finally rose in rebellion.[50] Claiming to have received a secret edict from Xuanzong instructing him to suppress Yang Guozhong, An marched south from his base at Fanyang on December 16, 755. After the deduction of contingents left to hold Fanyang and other frontier areas, An's main army consisted of perhaps 150,000 men. In addition to the experienced regular troops of the Fanyang command, this force also included large groups of Tongra, Xi, Khitan, and Malgal tribesmen recruited from the



Map 19 North China during the An Lushan rebellion, AD 755–63

other side of the border.[51] Some 8000 of these barbarian warriors

were attached to An Lushan by fictive kinship ties, forming detachments of "stepsons" (*jiazi*) that could be deployed to control less reliable units.[52] The rebel army was well supplied with horses, in part because An's concurrent appointment as Commissioner of Stables had enabled him to transfer the best animals from the pastures of the northwest to his own command.[53] It encountered no effective resistance as it swept down through Hebei toward the Yellow River, covering an average of about twenty miles a day.[54]

The news of An Lushan's rebellion travelled even faster; it reached Chang'an in only six days, carried by express riders who must have covered more than eighty miles a day.[55] Xuanzong's response was to send officers to raise conscript-recruits in Hedong (Shanxi) and Luoyang, and Feng Changqing, an experienced frontier general and former subordinate of Gao Xianzhi, was soon to take command of the forces being gathered at Luoyang. An Lushan's eldest son, who happened to be in Chang'an at this time, was seized and put to death, and An's cousin An Sishun was quickly removed from his position as military governor of Shuofang controlling the Yellow River frontier and the Ordos region directly to the north of the capital. An Lushan, meanwhile, effected a crossing of the Yellow River northeast of Luoyang on January 8, 756, and marched toward the eastern capital. With a hastily raised army of 60,000 conscripts and volunteers, Feng Changqing attempted to block the rebels' advance at the Hulao Pass, the same strategic chokepoint where Li Shimin had halted Dou Jiande in 621. On this occasion, however, the terrain advantage was not enough to compensate for the qualitative imbalance between the two sides, and Feng's untrained rabble was trampled beneath the hoofs of An Lushan's veteran cavalry. After two more clashes on the road to Luoyang, the rebels entered the city on January 19 as Feng and the remnants of his army fled westward to Shanzhou. There they joined forces with another government army under Gao Xianzhi, some 50,000 guardsmen, frontier troops, and volunteers recruited in Chang'an with gold and silk from the palace treasury. Gao and Feng soon decided to abandon their exposed position at Shanzhou and withdraw to the strategic Tong Pass, but the retreat quickly degenerated into a disorderly, panic-stricken flight. Although order was restored at Tong Pass, both generals were denounced by Gao's eunuch supervisor Bian Lingcheng and put to death on Xuanzong's orders.[56]

The remnants of the forces led by Gao and Feng were soon joined by more reliable troops. More than half of the regular soldiers garrisoning Hexi and Longyou under Geshu Han, some 80,000 men, were recalled from the northwestern frontier to strengthen the defenses of the Tong Pass. The total number of men guarding the pass was now reported to

be 200,000, making the narrow defile between the Yellow River and the mountains all but impregnable. Xuanzong placed Geshu Han in overall command of this army, despite that fact that the general was in very poor health.[57] In the spring and early summer of 756, An Lushan made no attempt to force the strong position at Tong Pass. On February 5, the first day of the new lunar year, An had abandoned all pretense of loyalty to Xuanzong and proclaimed himself the first emperor of the new "Yan" dynasty.[58] For some time thereafter, he seems to have been preoccupied with the establishment of his new regime at Luoyang, and he also faced a serious threat to his communications with Fanyang. In February 756, Tang local officials who had not dared to challenge An's southward advance launched a popular uprising against his garrisons in central Hebei. An was compelled to dispatch strong forces under Shi Siming, a subordinate general of Turkish origin, to regain control of the region. No sooner had Shi's men made their presence felt in Hebei, however, than the local Tang loyalists were reinforced by a portion of the Shuofang army arriving from Hedong by way of the Jingxing Pass through the Taihang Mountains. When Shi Siming raced ahead with his mounted troops to attack the Shuofang column near the town of Changshan, the rebels' superiority in cavalry – usually the decisive element in Tang warfare and certainly the decisive factor in the campaign thus far – was negated by the skillful tactics of the Shuofang general Li Guangbi. Already in possession of Changshan, Li deployed his foot soldiers with their backs to the town wall and kept the enemy horsemen at bay with a dense spear formation and 1000 crossbowmen divided into four sections so as to keep up continuous volleys. Shi suffered heavy losses and was forced to retreat.[59] In May, Li was joined by the main body of the Shuofang army under its new military governor, Guo Ziyi, and Shi's rebel army was pushed back and besieged at Boling.

In midsummer, however, the fortunes of war shifted once more in the rebels' favor. Fearing that Geshu Han might use the immense force gathered at Tong Pass to carry out a coup in Chang'an, and encouraged by reports that the rebel forces outside the pass were weak and unprepared, Yang Guozhong persuaded Xuanzong to order the general to march east and attack the enemy. Geshu suspected a trap and other Tang commanders also had deep misgivings, but the order was obeyed. On July 5, the Tang army began to advance toward Shanzhou. Two days later, when they encountered rebel forces west of Lingbao, Geshu's suspicions were swiftly borne out. The Tang vanguard was drawn into an ambush in a narrow defile where the troops were packed too tightly to put their weapons to good use. Driven to flight by a Tongra cavalry attack against their rear, the vanguard troops communicated their panic to the main body which

also dissolved into a mass of fugitives. The government army suffered terrible losses, with many men drowning in the Yellow River as they attempted to swim to safety, while the rebels followed up their success by storming Tong Pass. Geshu Han was captured and brought as a prisoner to Luoyang.[60]

With the capital now uncovered, Xuanzong, his favorite concubine Yang Guifei, her cousin Yang Guozhong, and an escort of imperial guards set out on the road to Sichuan. At the Mawei post station, about thirty-five miles west of Chang'an, the guardsmen mutinied and forced the emperor to have both of the Yangs – whom they blamed for the disaster – put to death. Xuanzong eventually arrived safely in Chengdu, but power was already slipping from his hands. The crown prince had fled northwest to Lingwu on the Yellow River – headquarters of the Shuofang army – to rally support, and on August 12 he proclaimed himself emperor. He received the allegiance of the Tang forces in North China and later the acquiescence of Xuanzong as well. A rebel army occupied Chang'an, while the Shuofang forces abandoned their campaign in Hebei and marched west to protect their new ruler (who would be known posthumously as Suzong).[61]

An Lushan's power reached its apogee with the capture of Chang'an and the recovery of Hebei, but at this point his armies stalled. The rebels inflicted several more defeats on Tang forces in Guanzhong, but were unable to extend their control beyond the immediate environs of the capital. Other rebel armies pushing southward toward the lower Yangzi region – the breadbasket of the empire, an important source of tax revenues and surplus grain whose loss would have crippled the Tang war effort – also made little headway. The stubborn defense of walled towns such as Yingchuan in central Henan, Suiyang on the Grand Canal, and Nanyang on the approach to the Han River completely frustrated the rebel efforts to reach the Yangzi. At Suiyang the defense was led by Zhang Xun, a local civil official and literary examination graduate who managed to hold the town for nearly a year. The rebels, presumably unwilling to leave a strong enemy position interdicting their canal supply line, did not attempt to bypass Zhang's stronghold.[62] The rebels' lack of offensive successes between the summer of 756 and the autumn of 757 was probably also influenced by weakness at the center. Early in 757, An Lushan – ailing and violently irascible – was murdered by a cabal of his closest associates, who installed his son An Qingxu as the new emperor of Yan. The result was much weaker central control over the various rebel field commanders. The son simply did not command the same respect in the rebel camp that his father had, and the assassination alienated many rebel officers of An Lushan's generation (among them Shi Siming).[63]

The Tang counterattack came in the autumn of 757. By this time, the loyalist cause had been bolstered by an alliance with the Uighurs, the most powerful of the Turkic Tiele peoples, who had replaced the Eastern Turks as rulers of the Mongolian steppe during the 740s. The alliance was negotiated by Pugu Huai'en, a Shuofang general of noble Tiele origin, and the Uighurs sent more than 4000 horsemen to join the Tang army in Guanzhong.[64] That army, now under the command of the Shuofang general Guo Ziyi, began its advance on Chang'an on October 29. On November 13, Guo met the rebels in a set-piece battle near the Xiangji Temple, about ten miles south of the capital. Guo deployed facing north, with the monastery behind him and his left flank resting on the Feng River, a north-flowing tributary of the Wei. The Tang line was driven back and thrown into confusion by the initial onslaught of the rebel army. Beyond the right flank, however, Tang reconnaissance discovered enemy cavalry who had been placed in ambush to fall upon the government army's rear at an opportune moment. Pugu Huai'en led the as-yet uncommitted Uighur cavalry in a devastating attack on this rebel detachment, then continued his advance to strike the rear of the enemy's main body. This blow brought about the complete collapse of the Yan army, and Chang'an was recovered by the Tang forces the next day.[65] The rebels retreated toward Luoyang with Guo's army in pursuit. They tried to make a stand in the narrow defiles between the Tong Pass and Shanzhou where Geshu Han's army had come to grief the year before, but were routed again by the Uighur cavalry on November 30.[66] The Tang army entered Luoyang on December 3, and An Qingxu escaped across the Yellow River to southern Hebei.

In the space of just a few weeks, both capitals had been recovered and a series of apparently decisive blows inflicted on the rebel forces. At this point, however, the government offensive ground to a halt. Organizational, jurisdictional, and logistical problems needed to be sorted out, and the mood in the Tang camp seems (not unnaturally) to have been one of relaxation rather than urgency.[67] Besides, the Uighurs, spearhead of the government's counterattack, had gone home after the recovery of Luoyang. The result was that An Qingxu was allowed a breathing space to rally and rebuild his forces in southern Hebei, and it was not until another year had passed that operations against him were resumed in earnest.

When the Tang offensive finally began in November of 758, it involved the forces of no fewer than nine different military governors. Only three of these men represented frontier commands that had existed before 755; all the others controlled new military provinces that had been carved out of the interior of North China in response to the exigencies of the rebellion. Their total force was reported to

number more than 200,000 men, but shaky command arrangements meant that the whole was rather less than the sum of its parts. None of the generals was assigned to supreme command; instead, Yu Chao'en, a powerful eunuch who enjoyed Suzong's trust, was present in a coordinating role as army supervisor. This arrangement was said to have come about because neither of the two most powerful military governors, Guo Ziyi and Li Guangbi, could be made to serve under the other. It is also suggestive of the court's distrust of its own generals, and the extent to which those generals – though not yet independent warlords – had been able to free themselves from central control.[68]
Despite the less than optimal command arrangements, the government's armies were able to defeat An Qingxu in the field and lay siege to his headquarters at Xiangzhou (today's Anyang) in southern Hebei. With his situation now desperate, An appealed to Shi Siming, whose forces were in control of Fanyang and northern Hebei. Shi was by this time no longer a subordinate of the Yan emperor, but an autonomous actor who had at one point even made a nominal submission to the Tang court. Shi sent a relatively small force to observe the situation at Xiangzhou, but it was not until the spring of 759 that he was willing to challenge the huge government army with his full strength. On April 7 he faced the Tang army north of the Anyang River. Just after the two sides had joined battle, however, a sudden dust storm cut visibility to just a few feet, provoking the flight of both armies. With the advantage of a unified command structure, Shi was able to get his men back under control relatively quickly. On the government side matters were far worse, with each of the nine military governors choosing to retreat in a different direction toward his own territorial base. None of them showed much confidence in his colleagues, and none was willing to risk facing the rebels alone.[69]
This "battle" saved Xiangzhou, but not An Qingxu. He was soon eliminated by Shi Siming, who made himself the new leader of the rebel movement. After consolidating his position in Hebei, Shi pushed south across the Yellow River in the autumn of 759. Instead of fighting to defend the eastern capital, his opponent Li Guangbi chose to retreat to the north side of the Yellow River at Heyang (about twenty-five miles northeast of Luoyang) and occupy a strong fortified position that could easily receive supplies and reinforcements from loyalist territory in today's Shanxi. Shi Siming occupied Luoyang, but Li's presence at Heyang – potentially a very serious threat to his flank and rear – prevented him from pressing westward toward Shanzhou, the Tong Pass, and Chang'an.[70]
The front line remained in the vicinity of Luoyang for three years. During this period the rebels experienced another violent change of leadership – the third since 757 – when Shi Siming was murdered by

his son Shi Chaoyi (who had been set aside as heir apparent in favor of a younger brother) in the spring of 761. The military deadlock finally came to an end in the autumn of 762, when the Tang court was once again able to secure the assistance of the Uighurs. One Tang column, including Pugu Huai'en and the Uighur contingent, marched east from Shanzhou, while Li Guangbi advanced from central Henan and other Tang forces descended from the high country of southeastern Shanxi. The decisive encounter occurred outside of Luoyang in November. The rebel army was smashed, and Shi Chaoyi made his escape eastward with an escort of several hundred light cavalry. As had earlier been promised by the Tang authorities, the Uighurs were permitted to sack the city of Luoyang; it was reported that the civilian dead numbered in the tens of thousands, and that the fires continued to burn for weeks. Other Tang units plundered the surrounding prefectures mercilessly for several months on the grounds that they were "rebel territory."[71]

This time the rebels were not able to bounce back as they had in 759. The defeat at Luoyang convinced Shi Chaoyi's key subordinates, the generals holding key territories in Hebei and northeastern Henan, that both Shi and the rebellion were finished. One by one, these generals turned against their chief and refused to give him refuge. In a display of the "bandwagoning" behavior so often seen in China's civil wars, they now sought to make the best deal they could with the victors. The Tang court, for its part, was more than willing to accommodate the rebel generals in order to bring the long and bloody rebellion to a quick and inexpensive conclusion. Pugu Huai'en, the general commanding the pursuit into Hebei, allowed those rebel commanders who submitted to retain control of both their territories and their armies. This strategy evidently had the full blessing of the court, since the ex-rebels were soon formally installed as Tang military governors. And it was entirely successful in isolating Shi Chaoyi, who was hounded to his death on the northern frontier of Hebei at the beginning of 763. Shi's suicide marked the end of the rebellion that had been launched by An Lushan in 755.[72]

Notes

1 Liu's memorial can be found in *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 84, pp. 2792–4.

2 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 201, p. 6364; also see Christopher I. Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 35–6.

3 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 202, p. 6385.

4 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 84, p. 2795; *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 108, p. 4084; and Lei Jiaji, "Cong zhanlue fazhan kan Tang chao jiedu tizhi de chuangjian," *Jiandu xuebao*, 8 (Nov-ember 1979), pp. 234–5, 240, and 249–50. Also see Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 68, and Kang Le, *Tangdai qianqi de bianfang*, pp. 158, 175–7, 191–2.

5 Kikuchi Hideo, "Setsudoshisei kakuritsu izen ni okeru 'gun' seido no tenkai," *Toyo gakuho*, 44 (1961), pp. 62–8.

6 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 213, p. 6797; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 199B, p. 5353.

7 Kikuchi Hideo, "Fuhei seido no tenkai," p. 426; Tang Geng'ou, "Tangdai qianqi de bingmu," p. 167; Zhang Guogang, *Tangdai zhengzhi zhidu yanjiu lunji*, p. 36.

8 Kikuchi, "Fuhei seido no tenkai," p. 426; Tang Geng'ou, "Tangdai qianqi de bingmu," p. 167; Sun Jimin, *Tangdai xingjun zhidu yanjiu*, p. 103.

9 Zhang Guogang, *Tangdai zhengzhi zhidu yanjiu lunji*, pp. 37–8.

10 Kikuchi, "Fuhei seido no tenkai," p. 435.

11 Wang Pu (comp.), *Tang huiyao* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), ch. 85, pp. 1560–1; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 205, p. 6507, and Hino Kaisaburo, "Dai To fuheisei jidai no danketsu hei ni tsuite," *Hoseishi kenkyuo*, 5 (1954), pp. 79–133.

12 Kurihara Masuo, "Fuheisei no hokai to shin heishu," *Shigaku zasshi*, 73 (1964), p. 128.

13 D. C. Twitchett, *Financial Administration under the T'ang Dynasty*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 9–17; Kurihara, "Fuheisei no hokai to shin heishu," pp. 125–32.

14 *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 50, p. 1327; *Tang huiyao*, ch. 72, p. 1299; Gu Jiguang, *Fubing zhidu kaoshi*, pp. 230–3.

15 Tang Geng'ou, "Tangdai qianqi de bingmu," pp. 169–70; *Cefu yuangui*, ch. 124, p. 19a; *Tang da zhaoling ji*, ch. 2, p. 7.

16 *Tang da zhaoling ji*, ch. 107, p. 553. The edict does not indicate the nature or amount of the award. Another source tells us that *fubing* who elected to remain on the border for a second three-year tour received twenty lengths of hemp cloth; see Wang Yinglin, *Yu hai*, ch. 138, p. 21b.

17 For an overview of the economic conditions during this period, see Pulleyblank, *Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan*, ch. 3.

18 Zhang Guogang, "Tangdai de jian'er zhi," pp. 100–1.

19 *Cefu yuangui*, ch. 124, p. 21b, supplemented with information from Li Linfu et al., *Tang liudian* (Tokyo: Hiroike gakuen jigyobu, 1973), ch. 5, p. 18b.

20 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 214, p. 6832.

21 Zhang Guogang, "Tangdai de jian'er zhi," p. 102; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 107, p. 3262; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 216, pp. 6906–7, and ch. 217, pp. 6926–7.

22 See, for example, Zhang Guogang, *Tangdai zhengzhi zhidu yanjiu lunji*, pp. 93–112; Kang Le, *Tangdai qianqi de bianfang*, pp. 162–4; and Zhang Qun, *Tangdai fanjiang yanjiu*, pp. 229, 235–8, and 243–6.

23 Variants of the list can be found in *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 38, pp. 1385–9; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 215, pp. 6847–51; *Tong dian*, ch. 172, pp. 4479–83; and Li Jifu, *Yuanhe junxian tuzhi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), ch. 4, p. 92, ch. 13, pp. 361–2, ch. 34, p. 886, ch. 39, pp. 991–2, and ch. 40, p. 1018. The numerous minor discrepancies are discussed in Tang Changru, *Tang shu bingzhi jianzheng* (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1957), pp. 34–7, and Cen Zhongmian, *Tongjian Sui Tang ji bi shi zhiyi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1964), pp. 210–19.

24 Tang Changru, *Tang shu bingzhi jianzheng*, pp. 33, 42.

25 Pulleyblank, *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan*, pp. 149–52, n. 2.

26 Robert des Rotours, "Les Grandes fonctionnaires des provinces en Chine sous la dynastie des T'ang," *T'oung Pao*, 25 (1927), pp. 283–5, 297–301.

27 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 97, pp. 3052–4; *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 125, pp. 4407–9.

28 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 106, pp. 3239–40; Pulleyblank, *Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan*, pp. 94–5.

29 For Xuanzong's military predilections, see Du You, *Tong dian*, ch. 148, p. 3780.

30 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 104, pp. 3211–13; also see Pulleyblank, *Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan*, p. 11.

31 Pulleyblank, *Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan*, pp. 9–13, 18–19, 20–2, 83–4, and 165, n. 62.

32 For more detailed treatment of the military qualification examinations, see *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 44, p. 1170; this is translated by Robert des Rotours in *Traité des examens* (Paris: Librairie Ernest Leroux, 1932), pp. 209–12; Kao Ming-shih, "Tangdai de wuju yu wumiao," in *Di yi jie guoji Tangdai xueshu huiyi lunwenji* (Taipei: Zhonghua minguo Tangdai xuezhe lianyihui, 1989), pp. 1017, 1020–4; and O'Byrne, "Civil–Military Relations During the Middle T'ang: The Career of Kuo Tzu-i," pp. 20–7, 288. The edict establishing the examinations is mentioned in Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 207, p. 6558, and *Tang huiyao*, ch. 59, p. 1030.

33 The only graduate whose name is known to us is the great general Guo Ziyi, a prefect's son who rose to command the Shuofang army during the An Lushan rebellion. See *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 120, p. 3449, and Kao Ming-shih, "Tangdai de wuju yu wumiao," pp. 1034, 1037.

34 Kao Ming-shih, "Tangdai de wuju yu wumiao," p. 1032. O'Byrne ("Civil– Military Relations," pp. 292–4) calculates that 21 percent of the men who served as military governors between 755 and 779 had risen from the ranks. Most would have begun their military careers before 755.

35 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 217, p. 6929; also see *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 200A, p. 5369.

36 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 215, pp. 6884–6. Also see Gao's biography in *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 104, pp. 3203–5, and Twitchett, "Hsüan-tsung (reign 712–56)," pp. 430–3.

37 See Pulleyblank, *Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan*, pp. 19–23 and ch. 7.

38 Du You, *Tong dian*, ch. 148, p. 3780.

39 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 216, pp. 6906–7; ch. 217, p. 6927.

40 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 216, pp. 6908–9; Pulleyblank, *Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan*, p. 98.

41 The Chinese account of the battle can be found in Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 216, pp. 6907–8. The Arab accounts are translated in D. M. Dunlop, "A New Source of Information on the Battle of Talas or Atlakh," *Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher*, 36 (1964), pp. 326–30. The exact site of the battle is not known, but is surely very close to what is now the border of Kyrgystan and Kazakhstan south of the town of Dzambul.

42 Du You, *Tong dian*, ch. 148, p. 3780. The exact level of remuneration for *jian'er* in this period is not recorded. One source indicates that after 755 the standard rate for regular troops may have been twelve lengths of cloth and 7.2 *shi* of grain per annum. See Li Quan, *Taibai yinjing*, ch. 5, pp. 558, 561.

43 Kikuchi Hideo, "Todai heibo no seikaku to meisho to ni tsuite," *Shien*, 68 (May 1956), pp. 88, 98.

44 Twitchett, *Financial Administration*, p. 86.

45 See Denis Twitchett, "Lands under State Cultivation under the T'ang," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 2 (1959), pp. 152–203.

46 See Jonathan K. Skaff, "Barbarians at the Gates? The Tang Frontier Military and the An Lushan Rebellion," *War and Society*, 18.2 (October 2000), pp. 33–4.

47 Zhang Guogang, "Tangdai jianjun zhidu kaolun," *Zhongguo shi yanjiu*, 1981, No. 2, pp. 122–4.

48 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 104, pp. 3204, 3206; Pulleyblank, *Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan*, p. 74.

49 For the palace armies, see *Tang huiyao*, ch. 72, pp. 1293, 1300; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 50, pp. 1326–7; Hamaguchi, "Fuhei seido yori shin heisei e," pp. 1498–500; and Pulleyblank, *Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan*, p. 67.

50 For An's relationships with Li and Yang, and associated political maneuverings, see Twitchett, "Hsüan-tsung," pp. 427–52.

51 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 217, pp. 6934–5.

52 *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 225A, p. 6414; Kurihara Masuo, "To Godai no karifushi teki ketsugo no seikaku," *Shigaku zasshi*, 62 (1953), pp. 520–3.

53 Twitchett, "Hsüan-tsung," p. 448; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 217, pp. 6923–4.

54 O'Byrne, "Civil–Military Relations during the Middle T'ang," p. 69.

55 Li Shu-t'ung, "Tangdai de ma yu jiaotong," in idem, *Tang shi yanjiu* (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1979), p. 326.

56 For these events, see Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 217, pp. 6935–40, 6942; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 104, pp. 3206, 3209–11.

57 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 217, pp. 6943–4; Twitchett, "Hsüan-tsung," p. 448.

58 Edwin G. Pulleyblank, "The An Lu-shan Rebellion and the Origins of Chronic Militarism in Late T'ang China," in John Curtis Perry and Bardwell L. Smith (eds.), *Essays on T'ang Society* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), p. 41.

59 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 217, pp. 6954–5.

60 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 218, pp. 6966–9.

61 For more information on these events, see Twitchett, "Hsüan-tsung," pp. 460–1.

62 David A. Graff, "Meritorious Cannibal: Chang Hsün's Defense of Sui-yang and the Exaltation of Loyalty in an Age of Rebellion," *Asia Major* (3rd series), 8.1 (1995), pp. 1–15. For Yingchuan and Nanyang, see *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 114, p. 3365.

63 Pulleyblank, "The An Lu-shan Rebellion and the Origins of Chronic Militarism," p. 43, and Charles A. Peterson, "Court and Province in Mid- and Late T'ang," in Denis Twitchett (ed.) *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 3, p. 479; the assassination is described in Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 219, pp. 7011–12.

64 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 220, p. 7032.

65 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 220, pp. 7033–4.

66 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 220, p. 7040.

67 For explanations of this hiatus in military operations, see Peterson, "Court and Province," p. 480, and Pulleyblank, "The An Lu-shan Rebellion and the Origins of Chronic Militarism," pp. 54–5.

68 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 220, pp. 7061–2; Pulleyblank, "The An Lu-shan Rebellion and the Origins of Chronic Militarism," p. 45.

69 Sima Guang, *Zishi tongjian*, ch. 221, pp. 7069–70; Pulleyblank, "The An Lu-shan Rebellion and the Origins of Chronic Militarism," pp. 45, 55.

70 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 221, pp. 7081–3; Pulleyblank, "The An Lu-shan Rebellion and the Origins of Chronic Militarism," p. 45.

71 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 222, pp. 7133–5.

72 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 222, pp. 7135–40; Peterson, "Court and Province," pp. 483–4; Pulleyblank, "The An Lu-shan Rebellion and the Origins of Chronic Militarism," pp. 46–7.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
Consequences of the An Lushan rebellion

In November of 763, scarcely a year after the termination of the great rebellion, a large Tibetan army suddenly advanced against the Tang capital of Chang'an. Descending rapidly into the Wei River valley from the northwest, the Tibetans defeated an inferior Tang force at Zhouzhi, about thirty miles west of the capital, on November 12. The very next day the emperor (now Daizong, who had succeeded his father Suzong in the middle of 762) decamped for the relatively safe haven of Shanzhou, on the road to Luoyang. On November 18 the Tibetans entered the city and installed an elderly cousin of Daizong on the imperial throne. They proceeded to plunder the palace and the city, setting fires as they went. Dispersed Tang troops took the opportunity to join in the looting, while much of the populace sought refuge in the hills to the south of the city. The Tibetans were not, however, in a position that was tenable for the long term. Recalled from retirement to deal with the crisis, the great loyalist general Guo Ziyi rallied Tang troops at Shangzhou and moved on Chang'an from the southeast by way of the Wu Pass, while other Tang commanders brought their troops down from the prefectures immediately to the north of the Wei River valley. With Tang forces gathering around them, the Tibetans evacuated the city on November 30, dragging a large number of women, scholars, and craftsmen into captivity, but abandoning their puppet emperor of twelve days to his fate. The capital was secured by Tang troops in December, and Daizong returned to his palace early in 764.[1]

The temporary loss of Chang'an was a dramatic indicator of the extent to which Tang power had been diminished by the An Lushan rebellion. The immediate opening for the Tibetan advance was created by the defection of a key fortress guarding the valley of the Jing River, but the groundwork had been prepared over the course of several years. As veteran Tang troops were recalled from the western frontier to be thrown into the struggle against the rebels, the ambitious Tibetan ruler Khri-srong-lde-brtsan threw his forces against the greatly weakened Chinese defenses. Each year, more towns fell to the Tibetans. Most of the Longyou region was eventually overrun, and the frontier shifted more than 150 miles to the east. Even after the Tibetans retreated from the Tang capital in 763, they remained entrenched on the headwaters of the Wei and Jing rivers, still within striking distance of Chang'an.[2] The areas north and west of the capital

were disturbed by Tibetan incursions throughout the the 760s and 770s, and the threat would not be removed until the collapse of the Tibetan state in the middle of the ninth century.

The Tibetan advance was significant not only because of the prolonged threat to the capital region, but also because it engulfed the pasture lands where most of the Tang government's horses had been bred in the years before the An Lushan rebellion. The imperial herds had counted 325,700 horses in 754.[3] After the rebellion, however, government armies were often short of horses, and frontier commanders complained that their meager cavalry forces were hopelessly outnumbered by those of the Tibetans.[4] This was an important and lasting cause of Tang military weakness, not only vis-à-vis the Tibetans and other Inner Asian peoples, but also against the various military governors who had been able to carve out autonomous and semi-autonomous domains in the interior of the empire during the course of the great rebellion.[5]

It was fortunate for the Tang empire that the Uighurs, the dominant power on the northern steppe from the 740s until their overthrow by Kirghiz invaders in 840, had no interest in acquiring Chinese territory. On occasion, as in 757 and 762, Uighur rulers even took action to support the Tang court. Their stance, however, seems to have been shaped by ruthless self-interest rather than real friendship. For them, the Chinese agrarian economy was a resource to be exploited. This exploitation took the form of a frontier trade in which Uighur horses were exchanged for Chinese silk. The animals surrendered by the Uighurs were often small, weak, or unhealthy, and the prices demanded were exorbitant – as much as forty lengths of silk for a single horse. In view of their relative weakness, the Chinese had little choice but to accept these terms, and to overlook the many acts of violence committed by Uighur visitors to Chang'an. In the 840s, after the collapse of the qaghanate, Tang military power would be turned against the Uighur remnants on the steppe frontier; within China, Uighur residents and the Sogdian merchants who had traded under Uighur protection were subjected to savage persecution.[6]

From the An Lushan rebellion to the end of the Tang dynasty in the early years of the tenth century, despite the Tibetan pressure and occasional friction with the Uighurs, China's military power was for the most part absorbed in internal conflicts. The rebellion had been made possible by the establishment of powerful, potentially autonomous military commands on the frontiers, and its suppression had in turn brought about the transplantation of the frontier model into the interior of the empire. Not only were the surrendered rebel generals in Hebei permitted to retain control of their armies and territories, but many new regional military commands had been

hastily set up to arrest the progress of the rebels in the earlier stages of the conflict. Their commanders were granted the authority to requisition manpower and provisions from these territorial bases in order to maintain their armies in the field.[7] When the rebellion was over, the new military provinces remained as more or less permanent features of the political landscape. The ex-rebels and their successors ran largely autonomous warlord regimes that appointed their own officials, paid no taxes to the center, and had to be held in check by strong loyalist forces stationed nearby. For this reason alone the new military commands in the interior became indispensable. But many of the loyalist provinces also displayed autonomous tendencies, and some – most notably Pinglu in what is now Shandong province and Huaixi in south-central Henan – came to differ very little from the former rebels in Hebei.

The turbulent years from 755 to 763 saw the number of military provinces increase from the original ten frontier commands to approximately forty, most of which were located in the interior of the empire. These territories ranged in size from two or three prefectures to as many as fifteen.[8] Some were headed by military governors (*jiedushi*) who usually held concurrent authority as civil governors (*guanchashi*), others by civil governors who also held local military authority as "chief commissioner for military training" or "chief defense commissioner."[9] In almost all of the provinces, both civil and military authority resided in the same individual.

There were significant differences among the provinces both in their level of militarization and their basic orientation toward the Tang court. Representing one extreme were the ex-rebel provinces of Hebei: Wei-Bo in the south along the Yellow River; Chengde at the mouth of the Jingxing Pass in central Hebei; and Youzhou with its headquarters at Fanyang on the northern frontier, the old base of An Lushan. (A fourth rebel province, Zhaoyi in the southwestern corner of Hebei, had switched to the loyalist camp in 775 after losing much of its territory to aggression by Wei-Bo.) They were armed to the teeth, paid little more than lip service to imperial authority, and insisted on the right of hereditary succession to the office of military governor. Although it had been founded by forces that fought on the side of the court during the An Lushan rebellion (and drew its name from the old frontier command in southern Manchuria where its men had originally been based), the Pinglu command in today's Shandong was also a member of this group until its dismemberment in 819. Inheriting the ethnically mixed character of the old frontier armies, some of these military provinces were led by men of non-Chinese origin. The pattern was most pronounced in Chengde, which was established by a rebel general of Xi origin named Li Baochen. In 782 Li's son was overthrown

by his principal cavalry commander, a Khitan named Wang Wujun whose descendants continued to rule the province until 820. In 821 power was seized by an officer of Uighur origin whose heirs were still ruling the province at the beginning of the tenth century.[10] Pinglu was in the hands of a Korean dynasty from 765 to 819, and Youzhou was ruled by Uighur generals for ten years in the second half of the ninth century.[11] It should be noted, however, that the ordinary people of these territories were overwhelmingly of Han Chinese stock, and the behavior of the "barbarian" rulers of Chengde and Pinglu differed little from that of the members of the Chinese Tian family who governed Wei-Bo.

Facing these recalcitrant provinces along a confrontation line in Shanxi and Henan was a string of loyalist provinces which maintained very powerful military forces: Hedong, Ze-Lu (the remnants of Zhaoyi), Bian-Song, and Xuzhou. The military provinces in Henan were especially sensitive for the Tang court because they guarded the Bian Canal, the principal route for tax and tribute revenues from the rich lower Yangzi region and therefore the financial and logistical lifeline of the government. These provinces normally accepted court appointees – including civil officials as well as military men – but some were especially prone to coups and mutinies, and there were occasionally open rebellions against imperial authority, as in Bian-Song in 777 and Ze-Lu in the early 840s. Another group of heavily militarized provinces was located to the north and west of the capital. Their primary responsibility was to protect Chang'an from the Tibetans, who were in the habit of launching attacks in the autumn when their horses were in top condition after spring and summer grazing. Since these provinces were located in close proximity to the seat of imperial authority and were, moreover, dependant on supplies brought up from the south and channeled through the capital, they were relatively easy to control – until the last years of the dynasty, when central armies no longer existed to hold them in check. In contrast to North China, the rich provinces of the south that provided the economic basis for imperial power were only lightly garrisoned. Their governors tended to be civil officials, and rebellions in this region were rare occurrences.[12]

Provincial armies varied greatly in size. The largest military establishments were found in the most independent of the northern regional commands, which possessed rich, populous territories and had to be on constant guard against the forcible reassertion of central authority. Pinglu, the largest of all, maintained an army of 100,000 men, and Wei-Bo followed closely with perhaps 70,000. Chengde had about 50,000.[13] Some of the loyalist armies in the north were also extremely large; the army of Bian-Song, positioned to confront Pinglu,

itself approached 100,000 men in the late eighth century.[14] In the south, however, it was a very different situation. In 859, for example, the provincial governor of Zhedong (eastern Zhejiang) had only a few hundred troops at his disposal.[15] Most provincial military establishments were somewhere between these extremes, perhaps 15,000 men in the late 770s. The center imposed upper limits on these forces, but such limits were easily circumvented and sometimes ignored altogether.[16]

The armies of the military governors, and especially those of the large northern provinces, had complex command structures and were split into several distinct components. The main army in each province was concentrated at the prefectural city that served as the headquarters of the military governor. Divided into several large units under troop commanders (*bing ma shi*), it was by far the largest force in the province and formed the nucleus of its field army in the event of war.[17] In addition to the main army, a provincial governor's forces also included a number of outlying garrisons. These were deliberately kept small, seldom exceeding 2000 men, so as not to pose a threat to the authority of the governor. Garrisons were positioned to defend prefectural cities and other strategic points in the province, including mountain passes, river crossings, and locations of economic importance such as salt pans and rural markets. Garrisons normally occupied fortified positions, ranging from walled towns to earthworks and palisades, and dense networks of small forts were the key to the defense of some of the autonomous military provinces.[18] Local forces commanded by the prefects were the third component of the late Tang provincial armies. Prefects were primarily civil administrators, but had military leadership thrust on them during the An Lushan rebellion; from 756 it became usual for prefects to serve concurrently as militia training commissioners.[19] While the men of the main army and the outlying armies were full-time professional soldiers of the *jian'er* type, prefectural forces tended to be made up of militiamen who supported themselves by farming, received periodic training during the winter slack season, and rendered part-time military service in exchange for exemption from taxes and corvée. When called to duty, they were employed primarily in defensive roles in their home areas. They provided military governors with a valuable supplement to their regular troops, but the regulars were the largest and most important component of all of the strong northern armies.[20]

The tripartite force structure of main army, outlying garrisons, and prefectural forces was intended to guarantee the authority of the military governor within his own province without compromising its defense against external threats. Outlying garrisons dominated the prefectures, while the main army was in most cases more than

sufficient for dealing with a rebellious garrison.[21] The ultimate guarantee of a governor's power was his main army, but this was also the weak point in the system. Its soldiers enjoyed better pay and more privileges than the men of other units, but this by no means assured their loyalty. In many provinces these forces became known for their arrogance and unruliness; they developed praetorian tendencies, were easily manipulated by ambitious officers, and often drove out unpopular governors and replaced them with men more to their liking. All this was especially true of the elite headquarters units that formed the innermost core of the provincial army and provided the immediate guard for the governor's headquarters. The classic example is the Wei-Bo "headquarters guard" (*yajun*), an elite corps that had been formed by that province's first military governor, Tian Chengsi. The men of this force, originally 5000 strong, were chosen for their size and strength; they were much better rewarded than the rest of the army, and membership eventually became a hereditary privilege that was passed from father to son. Extremely jealous of their privileges, they came to dominate the politics of Wei-Bo in the ninth century and intervened to install military governors of their own choosing in 812, 822, 829, 870, 883, and 888. After narrowly

Map 20 Tang provinces in AD 785

surviving an unsuccessful coup attempt in 905, the then military governor, Luo Shaowei, arranged the massacre of the entire headquarters guard with the assistance of a strong force sent by his ally, the Bianzhou warlord Zhu Quanzhong.[22]

Massacres of this sort were, however, a last resort. The usual, and, by the middle of the ninth century, almost universal response of military governors to the threat posed by their headquarters garrisons was to hold them in check by creating new bodyguard units composed of personal retainers. Known variously as "private troops," "intimate troops," or "household troops," these forces were often formed from the household servants and slaves of the military governor, reinforced by fugitives from justice and other desperadoes who had sought his protection. Such forces varied in size. In 784 the rebellious Youzhou military governor Zhu Tao was reported to have no less than 10,000 private retainers, amounting to one-sixth of his army, but private

forces of a few hundred or perhaps one or two thousand men were much more common.[23] Though seldom a match for the headquarters garrison in numbers, they insulated the military governor from pressures that might be brought to bear by his unruly soldiery and provided him with a reliable corps of military police. The loyalty of private retainers was sometimes reinforced through the establishment of fictive kinship ties, with military governors recognizing key subordinates or even entire units as their adopted sons.[24]

Fictive kinship and the private retainer corps were only two of the many tools employed by military governors to maintain control of their armies and provinces. They also exploited real kinship ties by appointing close relatives to key command positions and forming marriage alliances with the families of important subordinates. Prudent military governors made sure that the officers and regular troops of the provincial army were generously rewarded, and the elite headquarters guard units and private retainer groups were rewarded most generously of all. Coercion also had a role to play. Family members of outlying garrison commanders were sometimes held hostage at the governor's headquarters, and spies and informers found ample employment.[25] One of the most important officers on a military governor's staff was the provost marshal (*duyuhou*), responsible for maintaining military discipline and ferreting out disloyalty.[26] Such measures were essential to the security of the more independent of the military governors, who were in an especially vulnerable position insofar as they could not assume that they would always enjoy the prestige of court-bestowed appointment to help them keep their armies under control.[27]

Just as the military governors were faced with the problem of maintaining control over their forces, the principal political–military challenge confronting the Tang court for more than a century after the suppression of the An Lushan rebellion was to strengthen central control over the military provinces. A variety of institutions and policies were adopted to this end. The employment of court eunuchs as army supervisors (*jianjunshi*), only haphazardly applied during the pre-rebellion period, was expanded and systematized. Eunuch supervisors were now assigned to almost all of the provincial military commands on a regular basis. These supervisors served for three-year terms. They had their own administrative and clerical staff, and some of them brought armed retinues that could be as large as several thousand men. The army supervisor was supposed to be equal to the governor in status. While the governor exercised command authority, the supervisor's job was to keep the court informed of developments in the garrison and to act as necessary to put down mutinies and prevent rebellion.[28] Another tool of control was a rebuilt and greatly enlarged

Imperial Palace Army based in and around Chang'an. The nucleus of this force was the Shence ("inspired strategy") Army, a veteran frontier unit that had been redeployed to fight the An Lushan rebels. The Imperial Palace Army quickly came under the administrative and operational control of senior court eunuchs, and eventually grew to number more than 150,000 men.[29] It helped to defend the northwestern frontier against Tibetan incursions, served as a deterrent to potential rebels, and reduced the court's dangerous dependence on the "loyal" provincial armies. From the 760s until its destruction in 880 during the Huang Chao rebellion, the Imperial Palace Army was the mainstay of central military power and an important factor contributing to the survival of the dynasty. At the same time, however, it also enabled the eunuchs to dominate court politics – even to the point of manipulating the imperial succession in the first half of the ninth century.[30]

The increased power and prominence of eunuchs as provincial army supervisors and Imperial Palace Army controllers were in part a reflection of the court's distrust of military men in the wake of the An Lushan rebellion. The reassertion of civilian control over the military became one of the central goals of the Tang government, and military leaders who had made their careers entirely within the military establishment came to be regarded with deep suspicion. During the half-century after 755, the court's relations with its generals were often badly strained. Guo Ziyi, a figure of exemplary loyalty and one of the government's most successful generals, was not entrusted with a field command during the last three years of the rebellion. Guo's Shuofang colleague Li Guangbi fell under suspicion shortly before his death in 764. Lai Tian, who had won the sobriquet "Bite-Iron" during his stubborn defense of Yingchuan against An Lushan's men, was denounced by eunuchs and forced to commit suicide at the beginning of 763. During this same period in 763–4, Pugu Huai'en – architect of the Uighur alliance and pacifier of the Hebei rebels – was badgered into rebellion by a cabal of military rivals and hostile eunuchs. The pattern was repeated during the civil war of the early 780s, when suspicion and misunderstanding pushed yet another Shuofang general, Li Huaiguang, to the brink of revolt.[31]

With political reliability now the paramount consideration in selecting military leaders, important commands were often entrusted to civil officials or eunuchs rather than experienced generals. Pei Du, who directed the successful military operations against the rebellious province of Huaixi in 814–15, was a literary examination graduate who had served as investigating censor, court diarist, president of the Censorate, and vice-president of the Chancellery before he was given overall command of the field armies in Henan.[32] Wherever local

circumstances permitted, the court preferred to appoint civil bureaucrats to serve as military governors. In response to the enhanced power and autonomy of the empire's military elites in the post-rebellion period, there were new assertions of the fitness of scholars and civil officials for military command. The historical writing of the late Tang and the succeeding Five Dynasties period (907–60) offers many examples of civil officials who were able to beat the military men at their own game. One such man was Wang Jin, who held several military governorships during the 770s and brought the unruly Hedong garrison to heel by executing several insubordinate troop commanders who had scorned him as a mere scholar.[33] Another was Xin Mi, a prefect who put down a local rebellion in the southeast at the beginning of the ninth century.[34] Where the early Tang idea of military command had emphasized personal leadership on the battlefield, the post-rebellion period gave more attention to strategic acumen, administrative talent, and understanding of human relations as attributes of the successful general: "In antiquity, those who were considered famous generals had no need of the ability to fight in the front rank, or the strength to wrestle with tigers and bears. What is important is that one begins and ends with righteousness, and succeeds through one's skill at making plans."[35]

Eunuch supervisors, imperial appointment of military governors, and – as a last resort – the power of the Imperial Palace Army served to keep most of the "loyal" provinces obedient to the center most of the time. These devices, however, were largely inapplicable to the autonomous, heavily militarized provinces in Hebei and Shandong, which claimed the right of hereditary succession to the office of military governor. In its dealings with these hard-case provinces the court was normally content to pursue a policy of "indulgence," routinely bestowing the title of *jiedushi* on local dynasts who were willing to uphold the façade of imperial unity by paying lip service to the authority of the emperor. Concerned primarily with maintaining control over their own provinces and armies, these military governors were seldom interested in challenging the status quo. It was only when the court attempted to deprive them of their accustomed autonomy that they rose in open rebellion. The first large-scale revolt came in the early 780s. A vigorous young emperor, Dezong, came to the throne in 779 determined to reassert central authority over the autonomous provinces. When the military governor of Chengde died in 781, Dezong refused to recognize his heir as the new *jiedushi*. This precipitated a revolt in which Chengde was supported by Wei-Bo and Pinglu. Youzhou, however, sided with the court, and for a brief period at the beginning of 782 it appeared that Dezong's intransigence would be crowned with success. After repeated defeats by the armies of

Youzhou, the leader of Chengde was overthrown by one of his generals, the Khitan Wang Wujun, who made his submission to the imperial court. At this point, however, both Wang and the Youzhou military governor Zhu Tao were disappointed with the rewards they had received from the court and rebelled in unison in the spring of 782. Dezong now faced a united front of all the northeastern provinces, and the situation deteriorated even further at the end of the year when Li Xilie, the military governor of Huaixi in south-central Henan who had previously been in the government's camp, decided to launch his own rebellion. Li cut the Bian Canal, and the court was soon hard-pressed both financially and militarily.[36]

On November 2, 783, troops from the northwestern frontier province of Jing-Yuan, passing through Chang'an on their way to the battlefront in Henan, rioted when they found that the government was giving them only a fraction of the bounty normally paid to soldiers setting out on a campaign. Joined by an urban mob embittered by the special exactions that had been imposed to support the war effort, the Jing-Yuan troops stormed and plundered the palace and took control of the capital. Their former commander Zhu Ci (the elder brother of the Youzhou military governor Zhu Tao) emerged from retirement to lead them. Dezong fled to the town of Fengtian, some fifty miles northwest of Chang'an, where he was besieged by the mutineers for more than a month before he was rescued by government forces hastily recalled from the campaign in Hebei.[37] The emperor's fortunes improved in 784. An offer of amnesty, recognition, and restoration of the status quo ante persuaded Wang Wujun to turn against Zhu Tao, who was preparing to lead a large army westward to support his brother in Guanzhong. Wang joined forces with a loyalist army from Shanxi to inflict a decisive defeat on Zhu Tao near Beizhou in central Hebei on May 29, 784.[38] Chang'an was recovered three weeks later, though the last of the rebel leaders, Li Xilie, was not eliminated until 786 – poisoned by one of his subordinates who brought Huaixi back to nominal allegiance to the Tang court. All but one of the provinces that had been in rebellion at one time or another between 781 and 786 managed to retain their independence; their leaders were once again recognized as *jiedushi* in return for their nominal obeisance to imperial authority. More than ten years passed before Dezong was again willing to risk offensive action against a recalcitrant province, waging a relatively restrained (and unsuccessful) war against Huaixi in 799–800.

The status quo ante was restored so easily because the ambitions of most of the autonomous provincial military leaders did not extend beyond holding on to their own territories, armies, and customary privileges, and at most increasing their domains by small increments

at the expense of their immediate neighbors. Leaders with empire-wide ambitions, such as Zhu Tao of Youzhou, were relatively rare, and Zhu died of natural causes soon after his defeat at Beizhou. There was a general tendency to form coalitions against whoever happened to represent the greatest threat to the existing order. When the young emperor Dezong, determined to crush the autonomy of the provincial leaders, was the principal threat to the status quo, he was opposed by an alliance of several provinces. When a string of successes by government forces made the restoration of centralized imperial rule appear probable, Zhu Tao, hitherto a supporter of the court, switched sides and threw in his lot with the rebels. By 784, in the wake of the Jing-Yuan mutiny, it was no longer Dezong but Zhu Tao who seemed to be the rising menace. At this juncture Zhu was abandoned by his allies, who joined forces with the loyalists to deal him a crushing defeat. The long-lasting equilibrium that existed between the autonomous provinces and the Tang court has long been remarked by Chinese scholars. The great seventeenth-century thinker Gu Yanwu observed that the Hebei leaders did not dare to threaten the court because of their distrust of one another, while the survival of the court as a powerful external pressure served to maintain the balance among the various provinces and prevent any one of them from subduing the others and emerging as preeminent.[39]

The next great challenge to the equilibrium came from another ambitious, centralizing emperor. This was Dezong's grandson Xianzong, who ruled from 806 to 820. He enjoyed several advantages that Dezong had not had in the 780s, including a full treasury and a much stronger Imperial Palace Army, and with benefit of hindsight he proceeded in a much more circumspect manner, usually concentrating on the subjugation of one recalcitrant province at a time. His reign opened with easy victories over provincial leaders who were reaching for greater autonomy in Sichuan and the lower Yangzi region, and in 809 he was emboldened to attack the much more heavily militarized province of Chengde in central Hebei. This campaign ended in failure, with peace restored in 810, but two years later the military governor of neighboring Wei-Bo chose to surrender his autonomy and place his province at the disposal of the court. Between 815 and 817, Xianzong waged an arduous but ultimately successful campaign against the province of Huaixi in south-central Henan. Government armies totalling 90,000 men – some three times the size of the regular army of Huaixi – surrounded the province but made very little headway for more than two years. They were hindered by a divided command structure, with some twenty small contingents from as many provinces distributed among five separate armies, and by a tenacious defense based on both walled towns and networks of small forts. The

campaign was finally brought to a successful conclusion near the end of 817 when Li Su, the commander of one of the five government armies, made a daring and unconventional thrust through the enemy's outer defenses to penetrate the heart of the province. Advancing under cover of darkness and a fortuitous snowstorm, Li was able to achieve complete surprise and capture the all-but-undefended provincial capital and Huaxi's military ruler along with it. The province was soon partitioned among three neighboring loyalist provinces.[40]

A similar fate befell Xianzong's next target, the very large and powerful province of Pinglu in today's Shandong. As government forces massed along its borders in 819, the military governor was killed by his own subordinates. They surrendered to the court, and Pinglu was divided to form three new (and relatively weak) provinces. By the time of Xianzong's death in 820, all of the autonomous provinces – even Chengde – had either been conquered or had submitted voluntarily. This was the zenith of the Tang court's power in the post-755 period, and it lasted only a brief moment. The arrogance of the civil bureaucrats sent to govern Youzhou in 821 quickly antagonized the military men of the province, who were told, "Now that the empire is at peace, fellows like you who can pull a strong bow are not worth as much as someone who can recognize the simplest written character!"[41] In that same year an ill-advised scheme to have the Hebei provinces swap military governors also led to unrest in Wei-Po and Chengde. By the middle of 822 mutinies had occurred in all three provinces and autonomy-minded local military men were back in power. The new emperor lacked his father's ability and drive, and the three provinces were allowed to go their own way after the failure of yet another military campaign aimed at bringing them to heel.[42] They retained their autonomy for the rest of the Tang and on into the Five Dynasties period (907–60) that followed. The other military provinces also remained an important part of the late Tang political landscape, and their loyalty could not always be taken for granted by the center.[43] When the great bandit armies led by Huang Chao swept across China between 875 and 884, it was ultimately the power of the Tang court in Chang'an that suffered the most serious damage. The leaders of the military provinces, on the other hand, gained much greater freedom of action, with the province becoming the key unit of political organization. This situation continued for some time after the fall of the Tang dynasty in 907. As we shall see, the institutions of the Tang military province had a significant and lasting influence on the structure of power in both the Five Dynasties and Northern Song (960–1127).

One of the most obvious consequences of provincial autonomy in the latter half of the Tang period was the pervasive militarization of the

empire. There had been perhaps 600,000 soldiers, almost all located on the frontiers, on the eve of the An Lushan rebellion. There were approximately 800,000 in 805, at the beginning of Xianzong's reign, and by the time of his successor the number had grown to nearly a million.[44] The majority of these men were not on the frontiers, but in provincial armies that eyed one another warily in the interior of China. According to one modern estimate, their upkeep cost twenty million strings of cash per annum, amounting to more than two-thirds of the state's total annual revenue.[45] The care and feeding of the provincial army was undoubtedly the single largest item of expenditure for most of the military governors, especially those in North China.[46] As in the years before the outbreak of the rebellion, regular troops were obtained primarily through the enlistment of willing recruits. The greatest reservoir of potential recruits was provided by the landless, desperate, and destitute, and particularly by peasants who were no longer able to wrest a living from the land after the breakdown of the government's land redistribution system and the formation of private estates.[47] Once they entered an army, they became full-time mercenary soldiers who were almost entirely dependant on the pay they received from their commanders in order to sustain both themselves and their families. This pay included a grain ration for the soldier and enough silk or hemp cloth to provide him with outfits of winter and spring clothing, and there might also be allowances of salt, wine, soy sauce, and vinegar. Soldiers also expected to receive grain rations for their dependants.[48] In addition to their regular provisions, soldiers might also receive special rewards of various sorts. There were bonuses of silk cloth for men setting out on campaign, and further rewards followed successes in the field. In some provinces, the soldiers received bonuses at major holidays and on the occasion of the installation of a new military governor.[49] The men of elite headquarters units were especially well rewarded. Those who guarded the governor's yamen at Xuzhou, for example, were treated to daily banquets.[50]

In the professional armies of late Tang, remuneration was the key to loyalty. When an ambitious officer attempted to supplant his military governor, the typical course of action was to bribe the soldiers of the garrison in order to secure their support.[51] Conversely, any reduction of customary rewards and bonuses could easily lead to violent mutiny. The Xuanwu Army, based at Bianzhou on the Grand Canal, was especially known for its turbulence. When an officer named Lu Changyuan took over as acting military governor in 799, he made the mistake of refusing to distribute the customary gift of silk and hemp cloth to the troops. Already unpopular for his strict discipline, Lu was killed, sliced up, and eaten by the enraged soldiery.[52] A modern

Chinese historian has counted ninety-nine instances of mutiny in the late Tang provincial armies, with issues of remuneration and reward the most common source of the soldiers' discontent.[53]

The unruly behavior of the late Tang soldiery, with "soldiers bullying the subalterns and subalterns bullying the generals," was a new development in Chinese social and political history. As the eighteenth-century historical commentator Zhao Yi observed, "From the time of Qin and Han and the Six Dynasties there had been rebellious generals but no such thing as rebellious soldiers. After the middle years of the Tang, however, mutinies in the provincial garrisons happened all the time."[54] This development had many causes. Removed from agriculture and gathered in garrison towns, entirely reliant on military service for their livelihood, the soldiers were in a good position to develop a keen sense of corporate identity and collective self-interest – and to strike out violently when they perceived their interests to be threatened. Unlike so many of the fighting men of Wei-Jin and the northern and southern dynasties, they were not members of a semi-servile hereditary status group bound to their commanders by traditional ties of dependence. They must have been keenly aware of the extent to which their generals were reliant on *them* for their survival. And they belonged to a society in which commerce and market transactions were playing an ever-increasing role. Determined to exact the best possible deal for themselves, the professional soldiers of late Tang came to resemble a privileged and parasitic caste. Some units took on a hereditary character as sons followed fathers in the ranks; when a man was killed in battle a son or brother might claim the privilege of inheriting his military status and emoluments.[55] Soldiers were unwilling to give up their rice bowl when they became too old for combat, with the result that in some provincial armies many of the troops were not fit for duty.[56] Attempts at force reduction often led to mutiny, and on those occasions when men were discharged from service they showed a distressing tendency to turn to banditry as their new source of livelihood.[57] The predatory mercenary soldier, essentially a product of the new conditions of late Tang, was part of the Tang legacy to Song and would be a recurring problem in China's later history – including the first half of the twentieth century.

The rise of provincial authority and provincial autonomy in the wake of the An Lushan rebellion had other social and economic consequences that extended far beyond the military. The Tang government, like many of its predecessors, had sought to maintain a very high degree of control over economic activity. The Tang founders had retained the "equal-field" system of land distribution, originally introduced in North China by the Northern Wei dynasty in the last years of the fifth century. Under its terms all farmland was supposed

to belong to the state, and was periodically reallocated to rural households on an equitable basis (with a standard allocation for each adult male and supplemental allotments for other family members and dependants).The farm families were in turn responsible for providing the state with corvée labor (or paying a corvée exemption tax), and for paying a standard, fixed amount of annual tax for each taxable adult in the household. Taxes were usually collected in kind, that is, in grain and silk or hemp cloth. There were many additional complexities and actual conditions did not always follow the statutes, but there is ample evidence that the "equal-field" system did not exist only on paper but was actually put into practice during the first half of the Tang dynasty.[58] Commercial activity was also tightly constrained by governmental regulation. In all urban centers from the capital down to the county seats, the authorities established one or several official markets in fixed locations and required that all buying and selling take place within their confines. These markets were closely supervised by government officials, who enforced the use of standard weights and measures, made sure that trading occurred only during specified hours of the day, and determined (and publicly announced) the fair market price for goods and commodities at ten-day intervals.[59] Not all economic activity was subject to official supervision; there were, for example, many small, informal rural markets that were beyond the government's purview. Government control over the possession and use of farmland was also less than complete. Wealthy and powerful families were able to build up large estates by means both legal and illegal, and peasant taxpayers – especially those with inadequate allotments – absconded to become their tenants. This trend was already well underway in the years before the An Lushan rebellion, but the central government's control of the economy was far weaker in the new political landscape that existed after 755.

The new provincial administrations emerged as important economic actors in the post-rebellion period. Many sought to encourage the growth of new centers of trade within their boundaries as new sources of tax revenue that would be firmly under provincial control. Many of the informal, extra-legal rural markets eventually developed into important market towns as decentralization of administrative control promoted "a general increase in economic activity." Another reason that the new political order had a stimulating effect on the economy was because a greater proportion of the tax revenue collected locally was now spent within the provinces in order to support the administrations and armed forces of the military governors.[60] After the An Lushan rebellion, the Tang court lost the ability to enroll, enumerate, and impose taxes directly upon the majority of China's peasant households. This development is dramatically illustrated by

the decline of the registered population from approximately nine million households in 755 to less than two million in 760.[61] Trends already visible before the rebellion were now accelerated as the government lost the ability to control and reallocate land in accordance with the "equal-field" system and a private market in land developed. The obstacles that had once made it difficult (but not impossible) for wealthy families to become estate owners and landlords were now largely removed. At the same time, the post-rebellion political economy created new opportunities for men to acquire wealth that could be invested in landownership. Among the winners were merchants, military officers, men serving on the administrative staffs of the military governors, and officials working for new, specialized bureaucratic agencies such as the Salt and Iron Commission which administered the government's salt monopoly.[62]

The creation of the salt monopoly was as much a consequence of the An Lushan rebellion (and a reflection of the needs of the time) as was the division of the empire into military provinces. With the equal-field system largely moribund and direct taxation no longer an option, the court turned to indirect taxation. The initial moves toward control of salt production and distribution were made between 756 and 758, at the height of the rebellion when the government's need for revenue was acute. The salt monopoly soon became the center's single most important source of revenue, accounting for more than 50 percent of income by 780 (though it became somewhat less important thereafter). Salt was produced by government workers both at suitable sites on the seashore and at inland salt pools, then sold to merchants at an inflated price that was many times the cost of production. The Salt and Iron Commission, which was largely staffed by men from the mercantile world rather than conventional scholarly backgrounds, ran the operation, and its officials enjoyed many opportunities for personal enrichment.[63] The various military provinces similarly held out opportunities for new men to rise in government service and enrich themselves in the process. Military governors generally had the authority to appoint their own staff and subordinates, appointments which were approved automatically by the center. In many cases, their choice fell on soldiers and other men who lacked the education, credentials, social standing, and connections that would have qualified them for government office in the pre-rebellion period. These men often plowed their emoluments (and the proceeds of their peculations) into landownership, and contributed to the formation of the more broadly based, educated, landowning elite stratum from which the officials of the Song dynasty would be recruited by means of the civil service examinations.[64] An "enlarged class of educated landowners" would remain the source of both local power and official recruitment

until the last days of the empire, and a more vigorous commercial economy and a free market in land would also be key features of "late imperial China" from Song to Qing.

Not all members of society benefited equally from the developments of late Tang, however. Peasants were heavily taxed to support both the imperial court and the provincial military regimes, and the most hard-pressed were driven to banditry. By the 830s and 840s small bandit gangs were active on the plains of Henan and pirates were operating on the Yangzi River. In 859 a larger but still localized bandit revolt broke out in coastal Zhejiang and was not suppressed by government forces until the following year. A much more serious uprising broke out in the far southwest in the summer of 868, among troops from one of the Henan garrisons who had been sent there by the court to guard the frontier against the powerful kingdom of Nanzhao (in today's Yunnan). After six years on the frontier – or twice the three-year tour of duty to which they had originally been committed – the men mutinied under the influence of officers who were former bandits. They chose a supply officer named Pang Xun as their leader, marched northward toward their home province on the Bian Canal, and actually succeeded in capturing the provincial capital near the end of 868. Though they were finally crushed in the autumn of 869, the episode did not bode well for the established order. The mutineers had travelled a vast distance through the interior of the empire without being checked by government forces, and cavalry contributed by the Shatuo Turks (who had emerged as an important power on the Mongolian steppe after the fall of the Uighur empire) played a major role in their eventual suppression.[65]

In the early 870s, drought and famine led to an intensification of bandit activity in Henan as desperate peasants swelled the ranks of the roaming gangs. Small groups coalesced into larger forces hundreds strong and began to attack walled cities and fight pitched battles with government troops sent to hunt them down. While the great majority of the bandits surely came from the lowest strata of rural society, many of their leaders were "local strongmen" from families with some wealth and influence in the village community, and some had actually acquired a certain amount of education.[66] Huang Chao, the man who emerged as the dominant bandit leader in 878, was an unsuccessful examination candidate from Caozhou in today's Shandong whose family had become wealthy by selling salt. "Expert at striking with a sword and at mounted archery, he was but superficially instructed in letters, yet possessed verbal eloquence."[67] By the time that Huang took over the leadership, his following was many thousands strong. Between 875 and 878 the bandits had operated between the Yellow River and the Yangzi. Then, under pressure from government forces in

the north, Huang led his followers across the Yangzi and marched south to sack the wealthy south seas entrepot of Guangzhou (Canton) in the summer of 879. From there he moved north again, and a local military governor allowed him to get across the Yangzi unopposed in the late summer of 880. This was not the first sign that government commanders and provincial leaders were beginning to put their own interests ahead of those of the imperial court. Many had avoided confrontations with Huang's army, and at least one passed up an opportunity to destroy the enemy on the grounds that he had more to fear from a victorious court than from the rebels.[68]

Aided by the unwillingness of the provincial armies to face him in battle, Huang Chao swept north through Henan at the end of 880, gathering recruits as he went. He captured Luoyang on December 22, then turned westward immediately to threaten Chang'an. As Huang approached the capital, the Shence Army, the core of the Imperial Palace Army, was sent out to block his advance at the Tong Pass. By this time, however, the palace army was no longer the formidable force that it had been in the days of Dezong and Xianzong. A great many merchants and wealthy young men of the capital had bribed the eunuchs to have their names inscribed on the roster of the Shence Army in order to gain privileges such as exemption from corvée labor obligations, but now that actual fighting loomed they hired substitutes to take their places in the ranks. Many of these replacements were old, infirm, and entirely uninstructed in the use of weapons, and they were easily routed by the rebels during the first week of January.[69] The emperor (Xizong) followed the precedent set by his ancestor Xuanzong and decamped for the safe haven of Sichuan. Huang Chao entered Chang'an on January 8 and soon proclaimed himself emperor, but the empire did not fall into line behind him. The savage behavior of his bandit followers, including a great deal of violence directed at the educated elite, denied him the aura of legitimacy that literati support might have conferred, and his military position in Guanzhong was far from secure. He held the capital itself, but the place was ringed by hostile military provinces whose troops prevented him from dominating the countryside. In spite of the great difficulty of securing adequate food supplies, Huang's men held on until 883 when the court called in a steppe army led by the twenty-eight-year-old Shatuo leader Li Keyong. Badly defeated by Li and other government commanders at the battle of Liangtian Hill, Huang evacuated Chang'an in May and retreated eastward into Henan. He found scant welcome there, however, for the followers whom he had earlier installed as military governors, sensing the direction the wind was blowing, had by now gone over to the side of the Tang court. He fought on for another year, but his forces became bogged down in a long, unsuccessful siege of

Chenzhou and suffered repeated defeats at the hands of loyalist forces. Huang finally retreated into the familiar territory of his native Shandong, where he was hunted down and killed in the summer of 884.[70]

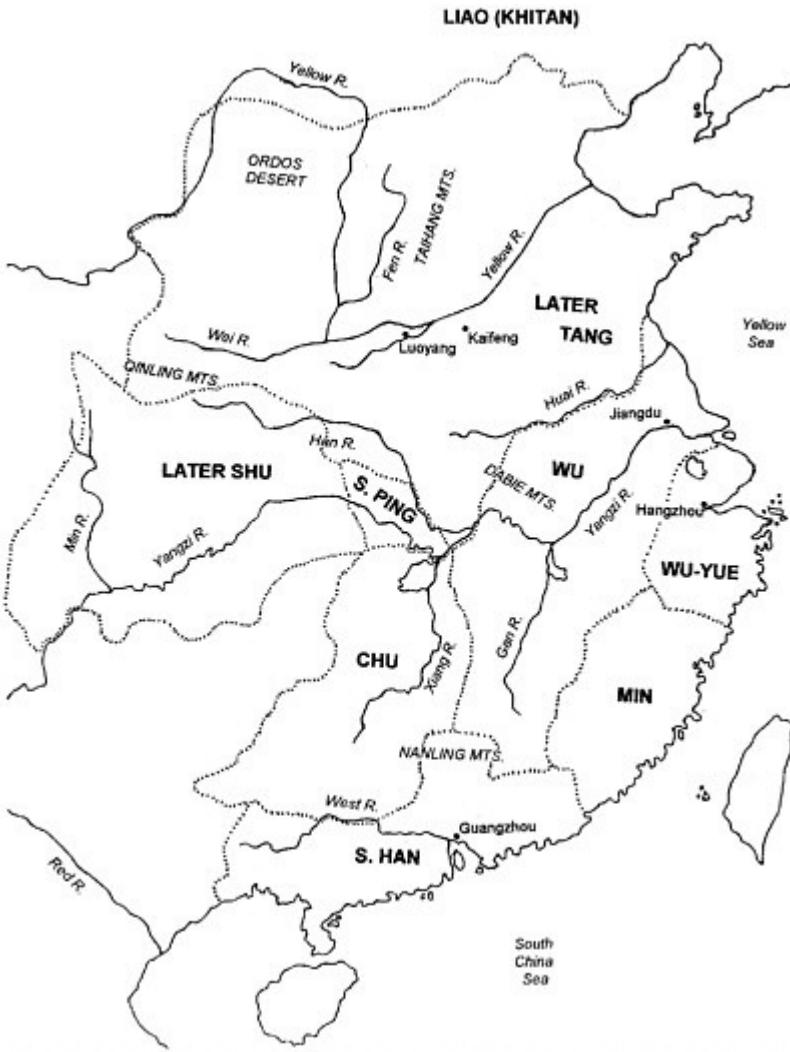
In 885, Xizong returned to Chang'an, but the new 54,000–man mercenary army recruited in Sichuan by his chief eunuch Tian Lingzi was soon destroyed in battle when Tian attempted to subdue two of the powerful northern military governors. Without a strong, effective military force at their disposal, Xizong and his successors Zhaozong (r. 888–904) and Ai Di (r. 904–7) became pawns in the hands of the military governors, who were now for all practical intents and purposes independant warlords. Real power was in the hands of some fifty different provincial regimes.[71] The situation was relatively stable in the less militarized south, where several durable and defensive-minded states were formed in territories corresponding to modern provinces – including Wu-Yue in Zhejiang, Min in Fujian, and Han in Guangdong. One of these "Ten Kingdoms," Wu-Yue, was established by the leader of a militia force that had been formed by local elites to protect their communities in these troubled times, and defensively oriented local militarization was also quite pronounced in Sichuan.[72]

In the north, on the other hand, military governors struggled with one another for dominance. By the end of the ninth century, two of them had emerged as preeminent. One was the Shatuo leader Li Keyong, who had compelled the Tang court to recognize him as military governor of Hedong in modern Shanxi; the other was Huang Chao's former subordinate Zhu Quanzhong, who was based at the strategic center of Bianzhou (modern Kaifeng), on the Bian Canal in Henan. The two men were bitter foes after Zhu had made a treacherous but unsuccessful attempt to murder Li in 884. Zhu had the upper hand initially. He extended his power over most of the North China Plain, made the last two Tang emperors his captives, and finally proclaimed himself first emperor of the new Liang dynasty in 907. However, Zhu's realm did not long survive his own death in 912. Only eleven years later, Liang was conquered by Li Keyong's heir Li Cunxu, founder of the Later Tang dynasty. The rest of the north's "Five Dynasties," the Jin (937–46), Han (947–50), and Zhou (951–60), were short-lived military regimes that emerged from the carcass of the Later Tang through a string of coups d'état. The Song dynasty emerged from the Zhou in the same manner, but its founders were able to fashion a more lasting imperial order and succeeded in restoring unity to almost all of China's territory, north and south, by 979.[73]

The institutions of the late Tang military province had a major influence not only on the unstable regimes of the Five Dynasties, but also on the structure and policies of the Song state. The office of

military governor was the springboard to imperial power for the founders of both Liang and Later Tang, and their imperial states became a sort of military province writ large. Zhu Quanzhong maintained his grip on his army with the help of a strong personal retainer corps, and he used his main army to dominate subordinate provinces in much the same way that provincial armies had once dominated the prefectures. The key contribution of the Later Tang was the creation of the "Emperor's Army" in 926; patterned after the elite headquarters force of a Tang military governor but on a much larger scale, it provided the ruler with a powerful force to keep his military governors in line.[74] This was of great benefit to the cause of centralization, but just as in the Tang military provinces it could also be a source of instability. The Han dynasty was replaced by the Zhou as the result of a coup d'état led by Guo Wei, the commander of the Emperor's Army. Guo formed a more intimate force, the Palace Corps, to protect himself against a similar maneuver by the Emperor's Army, but to no avail; in 960 his heir was overthrown in a coup led by the commander of the Palace Corps.[75]

This was Zhao Kuangyin, the founder of the Song dynasty. Zhao and his successor were the ones who finally succeeded in bringing the military firmly under control through a range of new institutional measures. They divided the central army into three separate elements (the Emperor's Army, the Palace Corps, and an elite imperial bodyguard unit), which they placed under the command of different officers and used to balance one another. They rotated units between the capital and the frontier to disrupt the ties between generals



Map 21 China in AD 930

and their subordinates, and formed their campaign armies from diverse elements that included units from both the central army and the prefectural defense forces. They made sure that command authority was divided between the Bureau of Military Affairs (*shu mi yuan*), which was responsible for setting armies in motion, and the generals who were responsible for leading those armies in the field. Army supervisors, including both trusted officers and eunuchs, were assigned as a matter of course.[76] From the time of the second Song emperor (Taizong, r. 976–97) the principle of civilian supremacy over the military was firmly established, and during the course of the eleventh century it became quite common for civil officials to be entrusted with important military commands. The Song rulers and

statesmen were generally successful in their efforts to keep the military on a tight leash, though it has often been asserted that this success came only at the price of reduced military effectiveness. The dynasty was never able to recover the "sixteen prefectures" in the area of today's Beijing that had been taken by the Khitan in the first half of the tenth century; all of North China was lost to the Jurchen invaders from Manchuria in 1126, and the whole of the country fell under Mongol rule in 1279.

The controls imposed by the early Song rulers were clearly a reaction to the rampant warlordism of late Tang and the menacing mercenary soldiery that was part of the Tang legacy to the Five Dynasties and Song.[77] Beyond this, however, it has also been suggested that the negative experience of late Tang gave rise to "antimilitarist sentiment" and contributed to the dominance of a "civilian ethic," a sort of allergy to soldiers, armies, and all things military, that is supposed to have colored Chinese attitudes from Song times down to the twentieth century.[78] It was, after all, the Song period that is supposed to have given us the famous adage, "Good iron is not made into nails, nor are good men made into soldiers."[79] Yet, even if we leave aside the complicated question of whether an antimilitary bias was really prevalent in late imperial China, the notion that the Tang–Song divide was a turning point in this regard seems somewhat overdrawn. The early Tang statesman Wei Zheng, who refused to watch a performance by dancers with armor and halberds in commemoration of Taizong's military victories, was by no means the only scholar of his time (or earlier) to express a disdain for military affairs.[80] Both before and after the An Lushan rebellion, there were educated men and civil officials who led armies – and others who shunned them.

Nor was the Tang–Song transition an obvious turning point in other respects. The most important development in military technology, the introduction of gunpowder weapons, appears to have had very little impact on strategy and the basic patterns of warfare.[81] Many of the military institutions of early imperial China – such as hereditary military households and various forms of militia organization – can also be found on the other side of the Tang–Song divide.[82] The number of soldiers did increase, rising to 1,250,000 by the middle of the eleventh century and to as many as four million in the later years of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), but this surely owed something to China's population growth and cannot be represented as a "military revolution."[83] Almost all of the various institutional devices used to restrain the Song military, taken individually, had respectable precedents in Han, Tang, or the age of the northern and southern dynasties. The division of command authority between "inner" and "outer" armies was old hat, as was the employment of army

supervisors. The rotational system of the *fubing* had worked to prevent soldiers and generals from becoming too well acquainted with one another, and Tang expeditionary armies had been put together from diverse elements that served under a single commander only for the duration of a single campaign. The assignment of scholars and civil officials to military command under the Song dynasty was not an entirely new development, either. Certain patterns of behavior, such as the militarization of rural society in response to the breakdown of central authority, can be seen from antiquity straight through to the early twentieth century.[84] Perhaps most important of all, the basic problem confronted by the rulers of late imperial China was not fundamentally different from that faced by Han and Tang: how to maintain the military force to defend the frontiers and deter internal revolt, without allowing that force to become a threat to the throne itself.

Yet the complexion of the military *was* somehow different in Song times and after, and different choices were made. The middle Tang (that is, the years before, during, and immediately after the An Lushan rebellion) was the beginning of this transition, and the consolidation of the Song dynasty marked its completion. Under Xuanzong, earlier institutional controls were relaxed in order to maximize the military effectiveness of the frontier armies, but after 755 a high price was paid for the temporary successes that had been gained by these means. The rise of autonomous and semi-autonomous provincial military regimes was accompanied by an upsurge of the commercial economy, and the full-time mercenary soldiery quickly developed into a self-aware, self-interested political pressure group. The policies of the Song rulers and the attitudes of the Song elite emerged in reaction to the new military conditions of late Tang. Few elements of the policy mix were entirely new. What was different was the entire *combination*: a range of controls was now employed rigorously and systematically to rein in a new type of professional soldiery, and old attitudes of disdain for the military were given a new edge and spread more widely than before among a much larger civilian elite. The Song response to the Tang crisis was by and large a success. It became fashionable for Song literati to mourn the passing of the *fubing* system, and to condemn the mercenaries of their own time as both less effective and more expensive than the farmer– soldiers of early Tang.[85] Yet the Song dynasty and its successors never faced a military revolt comparable to that of An Lushan, nor were they prey to the sort of praetorian politics characteristic of late Tang and the Five Dynasties. Song and Ming never came close to duplicating the military glories of Tang Taizong's reign, but they were able to hold their own against formidable steppe opponents for long periods of time. There would be intervals of

warlordism and disunity as one dynasty gave way to another, but never again would imperial China experience a prolonged period of fragmentation comparable to the two centuries between the An Lushan rebellion and the Song consolidation.

Notes

1 For these events, see Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 223, pp. 7151–7.

2 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 223, p. 7157. Also see Michael T. Dalby, "Court Politics in Late T'ang Times," in Denis Twitchett (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 3: *Sui and T'ang China, 589–906, Pt. 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 568–9.

3 *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 50, p. 1338; also see Song Changlian, "Tangdai de mazheng," *Dalu zazhi* 29.1–2 (July 15 and 31, 1964), pp. 29–30, 61.

4 Dalby, "Court Politics in Late T'ang Times," p. 569.

5 There is already a large literature dealing with the influence of horses on the military fortunes of the Tang dynasty. See Chen Yinke, "Lun Tangdai zhi fanjiang yu fubing," in *Chen Yinke xiansheng wen shi lunji* (Hong Kong: Wen wen chubanshe, 1972), vol. 2, p. 32; Li Shu-t'ung, "Tangdai zhi junshi yu ma," p. 241ff; and Fu Lecheng, "Huihe ma yu Shuofang bing," in idem, *Han Tang shi lunji* (Taipei: Lianjing, 1977), pp. 313–14.

6 For the Tang–Uighur relationship, see Colin Mackerras, "The Uighurs," in Denis Sinor (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 317–42; Colin Mackerras, *The Uighur Empire According to the Tang Dynastic Histories* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1973); and Fu Lecheng, "Huihe ma yu Shuofang bing."

7 Edwin G. Pulleyblank, "The An Lu-shan Rebellion and the Origins of Chronic Militarism in Late T'ang China," in John Curtis Perry and Bardwell L. Smith (eds.), *Essays on T'ang Society* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), pp. 53–5; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 218, pp. 6983–4.

8 Hino Kaisaburo, *Shina chuosei no gunbatsu* (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1942), p. 38; Kurihara Masuo, "An-Shi no ran to hanchin taisei no tenkai," in *Iwanami koza: sekai rekishi*, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1970), p. 164. Pinglu, the largest of the northern commands, had fifteen prefectures. Several larger provinces could be found in the south, but these were much less heavily militarized.

9 Wang Shou-nan, *Tangdai fanzhen yu zhongyang guanxi zhi yanjiu* (Taiwan: Jiaxin shuini gongsi wenhua jijinhui, 1968), pp. 115–16; Hino, *Shina chuosei no gunbatsu*, p. 37.

10 For the history of Chengde, see *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 142, pp. 3865–92.

11 *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 212, p. 5983; ch. 213, pp. 5989–95; Wu Tingxie, *Tang fangzhen nianbiao* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), ch. 4, p. 570.

12 These regional differences are discussed in Denis C. Twitchett, "Varied Patterns of Provincial Autonomy in the T'ang Dynasty," in Perry and Smith, *Essays on T'ang Society*, pp. 98–102; and in Zhang Guogang, *Tangdai fanzhen yanjiu* (Changsha: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1987), pp. 23–5.

13 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 222, p. 7144; ch. 225, p. 7250; ch. 226, p. 7277; and *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 141, p. 3838.

14 Hori Toshikazu, "Hanchin shineigun no kenryoku kozo," *Toyo bunka kenkyuojo kiyo*, No. 20 (March 1960), p. 90.

15 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 249, p. 8077; ch. 250, p. 8079.

16 Hino, *Shina chuosei no gunbatsu*, pp. 67–8.

17 Yen Keng-wang, "Tangdai fangzhen shifu liaozuo kao," in idem, *Tang shi yanjiu conggao* (Hong Kong: Xin Ya yanjiusuo, 1969), p. 219; Zhang Guogang, *Tangdai zhengzhi zhidu yanjiu lunji*, pp. 162, 164–5.

18 Hino, *Shina chuosei no gunbatsu*, pp. 48–55; Charles A. Peterson, "Regional Defense against the Central Power: The Huai-hsi Campaign, 815–817," in Frank A. Kierman, Jr. and John K. Fairbank (eds.), *Chinese Ways in Warfare* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 146–8.

19 Hino, *Shina chuosei no gunbatsu*, pp. 36, 50, 55–6; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 44, p. 1923; Du You, *Tong dian*, ch. 33, p. 909. In the more recalcitrant of the Hebei provinces, it was not unusual for a military man trusted by the governor to act as both garrison commander and prefect.

20 Hori, "Hanchin shineigun no kenryoku kozo," pp. 82–3.

21 Hino, *Shina chuosei no gunbatsu*, pp. 140–1.

22 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 238, p. 7694; ch. 265, pp. 8644, 8656–7; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 141, p. 3838; ch. 181, pp. 4686–7, 4688, 4690, 4692.

23 See Hori, "Hanchin shineigun no kenryoku kozo," pp. 103–20.

24 For more on this subject, see Kurihara Masuo, "To Godai no karifushi teki ketsugo no seikaku," pp. 514–43; and Yano Chikara, "Todai ni okeru kashisei ni tsuite," in *Shigaku kenkyuo kinen ronso* (Kyoto: Ryuogen shoten, 1950), pp. 231–57.

25 Charles A. Peterson, "The Autonomy of the Northeastern Provinces in the Period Following the An Lu-shan Rebellion" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1966), pp. 141–2.

26 Yen Keng-wang, "Tangdai fangzhen shifu liaozuo kao," pp. 220–5; Zhang Guogang, *Tangdai fanzhen yanjiu*, pp. 169–70.

27 Zhang Guogang, *Tangdai fanzhen yanjiu*, p. 110.

28 Zhang Guogang, "Tangdai jianjun zhidu kaolun," pp. 123–7.

29 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 235, p. 7580; *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 50, p. 1334; Song Minqiu (comp.), *Tang da zhaoling ji*, ch. 2, p. 12.

30 The most comprehensive modern study of the Imperial Palace army is He Yongcheng, *Tangdai Shence jun yanjiu* (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1990).

31 Tensions between the Tang court and its generals are examined in Pulleyblank, "The An Lu-shan Rebellion and the Origins of Chronic Militarism in Late T'ang China," pp. 54–8; Charles A. Peterson, "P'u-ku Huai-en and the T'ang Court: The Limits of Loyalty," *Monumenta Serica*, 29 (1970–1), pp. 423–55; Wang Jilin, "Tangdai de Shuofang jun yu Shence jun," in *Di*

yi jie guoji Tangdai xueshu huiyi lunwenji (Taipei: Zhonghua minguo Tangdai xuezhe lianyihui, 1989), pp. 914–21; and Zhang Qun, "Pugu Huai'en yu Li Huaiguang de fanpan," in Cho-yun Hsu et al., *Zhongguo lishi lunwenji* (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1986, pp. 87–119).

32 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 170, p. 4413 ff; *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 173, p. 5209 ff.

33 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 118, p. 3417.

34 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 157, pp. 4150–1.

35 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 161, p. 4237. Changes in military elites and the conceptualization of military leadership from early to late Tang are examined in greater detail in David A. Graff, "The Sword and the Brush: Military Specialisation and Career Patterns in Tang China, 618–907," *War and Society*, 18.2 (October 2000), pp. 9–21.

36 Dalby, "Court Politics in Late T'ang Times," pp. 582–3; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 142, pp. 3872–3.

37 For these events, see Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 228, pp. 7351–68; and ch. 229, pp. 7369–75.

38 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 231, p. 7432; *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 143, p. 3898.

39 Gu Yanwu, *Rizhilu jishi* (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1968), vol. 1, pp. 220–1.

40 For these events, see Charles A. Peterson, "Regional Defense against the Central Power: The Huai-hsi Campaign, 815–817," pp. 123–50. Li Su's exploit is described in Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 240, pp. 7740–3.

41 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 129, p. 3611.

42 Dalby, "Court Politics in Late T'ang Times," pp. 637–8.

43 The "loyalist" province of Ze-Lu in southeastern Shanxi rebelled against the court in the early 840s, for example.

44 Hino, *Shina chuosei no gunbatsu*, pp. 209–10.

45 Fang Jiliu, "Guanyu Tangdai mubing zhidu de tantao," *Zhongguo shi yanjiu*, 1988, No. 3, pp. 110–20.

46 Zhang Guogang, *Tangdai fanzhen yanjiu*, pp. 71–3.

47 Kurihara, "An Shi no ran to hanchin taisei no tenkai," pp. 165–6; Hino, *Shina chuosei no gunbatsu*, pp. 59, 209.

48 Zhang Guogang, "Tangdai de jian'er zhi," pp. 106–7; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 225, p. 7245. There is some evidence that the standard was 7.2 *shi* (432 liters) of hulled grain, six lengths of silk cloth, and six lengths of hemp cloth per man during the An Lushan rebellion. See Li Quan, *Taibai yinjing*, ch. 5, pp. 558–9, 561.

49 Fang Jiliu, "Guanyu Tangdai mubing zhidu de tantao," pp. 114–15.

50 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 19A, p. 653; Hori, "Hanchin shineigun no kenryoku kozo," pp. 91–3.

51 See, for example, Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 230, p. 7413.

52 *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 145, pp. 3937–8.

53 Zhang Guogang, *Tangdai fanzhen yanjiu*, p. 106; also see Wang Shou-nan, *Tangdai fanzhen yu zhongyang guanxi zhi yanjiu*, p. 228.

54 Zhao Yi, *Nian'er shi zhaji* (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1975), ch. 20, p. 267. Also see Sima Guang's comments in *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 220, pp. 7065–6.

55 Fang Jiliu, "Guanyu Tangdai mubing zhidu de tantao," p. 116; Zhang Guogang, "Tangdai de jian'er zhi," p. 108.

56 Fang Jiliu, "Guanyu Tangdai mubing zhidu de tantao," pp. 115–16.

57 Zhang Guogang, *Tangdai fanzhen yanjiu*, p. 74; Hino, *Shina chuosei no gunbatsu*, p. 214.

58 Twitchett, *Financial Administration under the T'ang Dynasty*, pp. 1–9, 24–34.

59 Denis Twitchett, "The T'ang Market System," *Asia Major* (new series), 12.2 (1966), pp. 221, 243–8.

60 Twitchett, "The T'ang Market System," pp. 240–1.

61 Twitchett, *Financial Administration under the T'ang Dynasty*, p. 17.

62 Denis Twitchett, *The Birth of the Chinese Meritocracy: Bureaucrats and Examinations in T'ang China*. The China Society Occasional Papers, No. 18 (London: The China Society, 1976), pp. 31–2.

63 Twitchett, *Financial Administration under the T'ang Dynasty*, pp. 50–8.

64 Twitchett, *The Birth of the Chinese Meritocracy*, pp. 31–2. For an overview of changes in the character of the elite from late Tang to Song, see Peter K. Bol, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 36–75.

65 See Robert des Rotours, "La Révolte de P'ang Hiun (868–69)," *T'oung Pao*, 56 (1970), pp. 229–40.

66 Robert M. Somers, "The End of the T'ang," in Denis Twitchett (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 3, pp. 720–26.

67 *Biography of Huang Ch'ao*, trans by Howard S. Levy (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961), p. 8, and p. 46, n. 3.

68 Somers, "The End of the T'ang," p. 741.

69 Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 254, pp. 8237–9; Liu Yat-wing, "The Shen-ts'e Armies and the Palace Commissions in China, 755–875 A.D." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1970), pp. 394–5.

70 These events are covered in much greater detail in Somers, "The End of the T'ang," pp. 745–62.

71 Somers, "The End of the T'ang," pp. 762–81.

72 Tanigawa Michio, "Todai no hanchin ni tsuite: Sessai no ba'ai," *Shirin*, 35.3 (October 1952), pp. 87–8; Kurihara Masuo, "Tomatsu no dogoteki zaichi seiryoku ni tsuite: Shisen no I Kunsei no ba'ai," *Rekishigaku kenkyuo*, No. 243 (1960), pp. 1–14.

73 Wang Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in North China during the Five Dynasties* (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1967) remains the best survey of Five Dynasties political history.

74 Wang, *The Structure of Power*, pp. 3–6, 149, 158, 160–1.

75 John Richard Labadie, "Rulers and Soldiers: Perception and Management of the Military in Northern Sung China (960–ca. 1060)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1981), pp. 33–4; Edmund H. Worthy, Jr., "The Founding of Sung China, 950–1000: Integrative Changes in Military and Political Institutions" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1975), pp. 106–7.

76 Worthy, "The Founding of Sung China," pp. 138–9, 173, 187–9, 195–7, 243–4; Wang Zengyu, *Songchao bingzhi chutan* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), pp. 1, 3–4, 32–3, 61.

77 See, for example, the comments of the investigating censor Li Jing quoted in Labadie, "Rulers and Soldiers," pp. 111–12.

78 Pulleyblank, "The An Lu-shan Rebellion and the Origins of Chronic Militarism in Late T'ang China," pp. 35, 59–60.

79 Labadie, "Rulers and Soldiers," p. 5.

80 Li Fang (comp.), *Taiping guangji*, ch. 203, p. 1534. For literati attitudes, also see McMullen, "The Cult of Ch'i T'ai-kung and T'ang Attitudes to the Military," pp. 59–103.

81 Edward L. Dreyer, "Military Continuities: The PLA and Imperial China," in William W. Whitson (ed.), *The Military and Political Power in China in the 1970's* (New York: Praeger, 1972), pp. 3–24.

82 The Ming dynasty, for example, had a system of hereditary military households. See Romeyn Taylor, "Yüan Origins of the Ming Wei-so System," in Charles O. Hucker (ed.), *Chinese Government in Ming Times: Seven Studies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), pp. 23–40.

83 For the eleventh-century figure, see Labadie, "Rulers and Soldiers," p. 47; for the Ming figure, see Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, p. 79.

84 See Philip A. Kuhn, *Rebellion and its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796–1864* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), and Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China*.

85 See, for example, Ouyang Xiu's comments in *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 50, especially pp. 1323–4 and 1328; Zhang Ruyu, *Qunshu kaosuo xuji*, Siku quanshu edition (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial

Press, 1983), ch. 43, p. 7b; Ma Duanlin, *Wenxian tongkao*, Siku quanshu edition (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1983), ch. 154, p. 28b and passim.

Conclusion

During the six centuries covered by this volume China went from the unified imperial order of the Western Jin dynasty to the chaos of the barbarian conquest of the north and the ensuing north–south division, and from there to the restoration of the unified empire by the Sui and Tang dynasties. After the An Lushan rebellion of 755, the empire again began to slide into division and civil war, with unity not being restored until after the establishment of the Song dynasty in 960. During most of this period of 600 years China was not at peace, nor was the outlook of rulers and key elites at all pacific. Almost without exception, the many changes of dynasty and regime during this period came about through military action, whether armed rebellion, war of invasion, or coup d'état. When the empire was united, strong dynasties projected their power outward in efforts to subjugate neighboring states and peoples; when the Chinese world was divided, conflicts among the various regional regimes were the order of the day. War and its preparations had an enormous and multifaceted influence on the fortunes of states and dynasties, on institutional structures and the social order, and on the lives of ordinary people.

Military events determined whether the people of China would live in a unified, prosperous, and (relatively) peaceful empire or in a congeries of squabbling regional statelets subject to banditry and invasion. The collapse of the Western Jin empire that initiated the medieval period was made possible by military institutions – the command authority given to the imperial princes, a hereditary and dependant soldiery, and a heavy reliance on the cavalry forces of steppe peoples both inside and outside the empire – and triggered by civil wars of the princes. The consequences were profound and long-lasting. The empire was divided, the north fell under barbarian rule, and large numbers of people migrated from the northern plains to the Yangzi valley in order to escape the prevailing violence and disorder. The reunification of the empire, a process begun by the Western Wei/Northern Zhou regime and completed by its Sui and Tang successors, was also the result of military operations and the development of new military institutions. Of particular importance was the creation of the *fubing* territorial soldiery by the Western Wei and Northern Zhou. Originally a matter of necessity for the outnumbered western state led by Yuwen Tai, the *fubing* system enabled his successors to build a powerful but cost-effective army by incorporating Chinese local elites and farmers. Again, the consequences were profound and farreaching. The new armies made possible the Zhou conquest of the North China

Plain in 577 and the Sui conquest of the south in 589, and contributed to the emergence of the vigorous, mixed-blood Sino-Xianbei aristocracy that governed all of China under the Sui and early Tang. That the Tang dynasty and not the Sui was the ultimate beneficiary of the process of reunification was also the result of military action, in this case Emperor Yang's massive, costly, and unsuccessful campaigns against Koguryo in 612–14 that destroyed both his own prestige and the power of the Sui empire.

The mid-Tang crisis and its consequences affords yet another example of the impact of war and the preparations for war on the political and social structure of medieval China, and on the lives of the people. The great rebellion of the frontier general An Lushan in 755 was made possible by new military institutions, namely the powerful, permanent armies of long-service veterans created to meet the needs of frontier defense in the first half of the eighth century. Here, too, the consequences were profound and farreaching. The An Lushan rebellion weakened the authority of the Tang court and left the empire deeply divided, a condition that facilitated the rise of a more vigorous market economy, private ownership of land, and a new landowning bureaucratic elite sprung from diverse origins. These would remain important features of Chinese society under the Song, Ming, and Qing dynasties – down to the twentieth century, in fact.

During the centuries treated here, much was happening elsewhere in the world. To focus only on the western fringes of the Eurasian land mass, the opening of this study around the year 300 coincides with the revival of the fortunes of the late Roman empire under Diocletian and Constantine. The centuries that followed saw the fall of the Roman empire in the west, the establishment of a number of regional successor states under Germanic princes, and the efforts of the Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian to recover Italy and Africa from the barbarians. The seventh century witnessed the stunning emergence of the Arabs from their desert homeland to put an end to the Sasanid Persian empire and strip the Eastern Roman empire of Egypt, Syria, and North Africa, making their Muslim caliphate a major world power. The eighth century saw the rise of the Carolingian Franks, culminating in Charlemagne's extensive conquests and his efforts to revive the Roman empire in the west, and with the ninth century came the depredations of the Northmen and then the Magyars. The endpoint of this volume coincides roughly with the Vikings' siege of Paris and the deposition of Charles the Fat, leading to the permanent division of Charlemagne's empire. In the eastern Mediterranean, the Eastern Roman (or Byzantine) empire was experiencing a modest revival of its military fortunes, while the caliphate was beginning its long decline.

How unique was the Chinese experience of warfare during this period? What, if anything, did the Chinese have in common with the peoples at the other end of Eurasia, and what was different? The first step in answering this question is to narrow the comparison. Is China to be compared with the Roman empire of Diocletian and Constantine, the Frankish state of the Merovingians, the empire of Charlemagne, Saxon England, Lombard Italy, Visigothic or Muslim Spain, the Muslim caliphate, or the Eastern Roman empire of Justinian and his successors? The closest comparison would seem to be with the Eastern Roman or Byzantine empire, though it had only a fraction of China's population and was limited to a much smaller territory. Like most of the Chinese states of the medieval period, the Byzantine empire was both autocratic and bureaucratic, with a sophisticated system of civil administration staffed by highly literate officials. Just as medieval Chinese states were the successors of earlier imperial dynasties and heirs to China's ancient civilization, the Byzantines (who never ceased to call themselves "Romans") were the direct inheritors of Greco-Roman cultural traditions and the political legacy of the Roman empire. In sharp contrast to both Byzantium and China, "no western European monarch" of the early medieval period "had at his command an organized, literate civil service which could deal with fiscal matters on a statewide basis."[1]

For the most part, the military tools and techniques of medieval China would have been familiar to a Byzantine visitor (and vice versa). The level of military technology was essentially the same. Both Chinese and Byzantine armies relied upon a cavalry composed of both mounted archers and armored lancers as their main strike force, but supported this with infantry armed with spears, swords, and bows. Many of the specific military practices of the Sui– Tang empire in China and the Byzantine empire, such as the arrangement made to protect the baggage train while an army was on the march, were remarkably similar.[2] Both civilizations were heirs to a substantial literature dealing with the art of war. The medieval Chinese had the classic treatises of the Warring States period, most notably Sunzi's *Art of War*, while the Byzantines inherited a tradition of Greek strategic writing dating back to the fourth century BC that included the works of Aeneas the Tactician, Asclepiodotus, Onasander, and Polyaenus among others.[3] To these they added a great many military treatises of their own, including the works traditionally attributed to the emperors Maurice (r. 582–602) and Leo VI (r. 886–912). These treatises borrow so freely from one another and from the earlier Greek tradition of Hellenistic and Roman times that one modern authority has pronounced that all the Greek and Byzantine military writings belong to a single, integral tradition.[4] In Byzantium, as in China, there was no

sharp break with antiquity, and the accumulated wisdom of the ancients was always available for consultation.

The Chinese and the Byzantines also shared some common attitudes toward war. For the soldiers of both empires, war was not just a trial of strength and courage, but rather an actvitiy requiring the application of intellect, cunning, and trickery to gain every possible advantage. It was not an end in itself, an opportunity to demonstrate one's manhood or justify one's privileged position in society. It was seen as a serious and dangerous business, not to be undertaken lightly. The famous passage in the ancient Daoist classic, the *Laozi*, that "arms are instruments of ill omen" is echoed by the anonymous author of a mid-sixth-century Byzantine military text: "war is a great evil and the worst of all evils."[5] In both cultures, generals sought to postpone engagements until the time was ripe, to increase the likelihood of success through artful maneuver or clever stratagems. Battle was to occur under the most favorable conditions that could be obtained. As the same anonymous Byzantine author put it, "If conditions are equal on both sides and the victory could go either way, we should not advance into battle before the enemy have become inferior to us in some respect." Both he and his near contemporary, the Tang general Li Jing, provided lists of the situations in which the enemy could be attacked with the greatest likelihood of success.[6]

Both China and Byzantium found defense against the incursions of nomadic peoples from the neighboring steppes to be among the most serious and intractable of their military problems, and both were profoundly influenced by this contact, whether it meant borrowing from the military techniques of the nomads or developing new methods by which to resist them.[7] A favorite steppe tactic employed by both Chinese and Byzantine soldiers was the feigned flight to draw the enemy into an ambush or set him up for a counterattack.[8]

There were also significant differences between Byzantium and medieval China. These were found not in the pragmatics of warfare, but in the relationship between the military and the civil authority of the state. Medieval China certainly had its share of military insubordination. Most of the southern dynasties of the period of division were overturned by revolts or coups led by military commanders, and in the aftermath of the An Lushan rebellion the professional armies of the military provinces frequently deposed their own commanders and sometimes even rebelled against the imperial court to protect their own customary privileges. It was not until the very end of the Tang dynasty that provincial military leaders became strong enough to depose emperors, but the praetorian politics of the provincial garrisons migrated to the center of power during the ensuing Five Dynasties period (907–960), when one ephemeral

dynasty after another in North China was brought down by military coup d'état. Compared to the situation in the Byzantine empire, however, the Chinese military and its leaders were relatively tame. As Warren Treadgold has pointed out, "acclamation by the army, not coronation or inheritance, was what made a man emperor. The army overthrew twenty-odd rulers, and tried to oust many more."[9] In contrast, almost all of China's Tang emperors came to throne by peaceful inheritance, and few if any were challenged by their *armies* (as opposed to eunuchs, provincial governors, and imperial princes who happened to have a modicum of armed force at their disposal).

Approximately two-thirds of the Byzantine emperors were men who had led troops before their accession to the throne, and it was commonplace for reigning emperors to command armies on campaign.[10] This was not the norm in medieval China. The emperor as warrior and war leader was a common pattern in the age of division, especially in the barbarian-influenced north, but it is noteworthy that during the Han period the only rulers who actually led armies were Liu Bang and Liu Xiu, the respective founders of the Western and Eastern Han dynasties. Their successors were not generals; they ruled from the capital through ritual, symbol, and the mechanism of the imperial bureaucracy. Even during the period of division, the rulers of the southern dynasties normally followed this model. After the empire was reunited at the end of the sixth century, Emperor Yang of Sui and Tang Taizong (Li Shimin) with their great Korean campaigns were significant exceptions to the Han pattern, representing the lingering influence of North Asian ideas of rulership among mixed-blood elites in North China. The steppe influence did not continue past the time of Tang Taizong. Later Tang emperors would sometimes speak of leading their armies in person, but none actually chose to do so. Rulership again came to be exercised from the palace, through ritual and symbol and the imperial bureaucracy. This outcome is suggestive of the tremendous staying power of the tradition of sacred kingship inherited from very early times, and of the Confucian ideal of government through virtuous example and proper ritual forms. Even Tang Taizong, one of the greatest warriors in all of Chinese history, saw fit to call for a proper balance of civil and military virtues in the government of the empire.[11]

The influence of what we may loosely term "Confucian values" extended well beyond the confines of the imperial palace. Together with the survival of an effective and literate state administration which obviated the need for feudal-type grants of land and authority to local elites, they helped to ensure that medieval China would not develop a true military aristocracy. Elite families would use armed force when they felt the need to do so, but it never became the central

element of their class identity and claims to superior status. Even the powerful mixed-blood aristocracy that emerged in the northwest under Western Wei and Northern Zhou, with its archery and horsemanship, its love of the chase and its talent for military leadership, lasted for only a few generations; under the changed conditions of the Tang consolidation its member families soon began to produce civil bureaucrats and men of culture rather than warriors. In spite of all of the violence and warfare of China's medieval period, the cultural legacy of antiquity made the significance of things military very different from what it was in Byzantium or the Latin West.

Notes

1 Beeler, *Warfare in Feudal Europe*, p. 11.

2 *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* trans. by George T. Dennis (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), p. 279; Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ch. 181, p. 5660.

3 For a comprehensive listing of the texts which make up the Greco-Byzantine military tradition, see Alphonse Dain, "Les Stratégistes byzantins," *Travaux et Mémoires*, 2 (1967), pp. 317–92.

4 Dain, "Les Stratégistes byzantins," p. 319; also see his "La Tradition des stratégistes byzantins," *Byzantion*, 20 (1950), p. 315.

5 *Tao Te Ching*, trans. by D. C. Lau (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 89; *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, p. 21.

6 *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, pp. 103–5; *Tong dian*, ch. 150, pp. 3839, 3842.

7 For the steppe influence on the Byzantine military, see Eugène Darkó, "Influences touraniennes sur l'évolution de l'art militaire des Grecs, des Romains, et des Byzantins," *Byzantion*, 10 (1935), pp. 443–69.

8 *Maurice's Strategikon*, pp. 52–3. Examples in the Chinese histories are legion.

9 Treadgold, *Byzantium and its Army*, p. 1.

10 Treadgold, *Byzantium and its Army*, p. 1.

11 *Tang Taizong ji* (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 1986), p. 122.

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